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WHILE THE RIVER WAS HIGH

2

Toward us came Tenye, a young friend of last year, and two small boys. She had seemed but a child the year before when she had danced bandamba with the other little girls while the men were getting ready for the Kromanti dance. But now she looked quite grown, and instead of the small apron she had worn, was wearing a cloth of a woman.

"You've grown, Tenye."

"*Ay, a kisi bobbi kaba*," one of the youngsters said. "She has her breasts already," and he went on to say that soon she would marry. "Two moons more," he said, showing two fingers.

"You will soon have many bracelets, Tenye, and when you dance you will be splendid."

"Ai," the boy went on speaking eagerly, "Abane will teach us how to dance when he comes back. He went to the French shore. Abane made Tenye, and he made me, too. I am Yamati, and he made Sabape, here." But they had not the same mother, nor did they live in the same village. "When I grow up," the child went on, "I will dance with seed rattles at my ankles. I will dance like Abane." The rattles his uncles would have to buy for him, or when grown he might buy them for himself, but his father would give him his gods when he was of age, and good dancing, too, was a thing of the gods.

"Who will get Abane's seed rattles, Tenye? Will you get them because you are the oldest child of the first wife?"

"Ah, no!" both she and the indomitable Yamati exclaimed at the same moment, and then both lowered their heads and would say no more, while the small Sabape looked away.

Now we had the year before discovered why we were so often met by young and old with the phrases, "I do not know," or better still, "*Massa Gadu sabi*—God alone knows," when it was evident that the speakers knew the answer very well indeed. The reason lay with the will of the G'an Yorka, or the G'an Zombi, or the Nana, as the ancestors are variously called. The ancestors it seemed had long

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609 ago, so long that no one knew just when it happened, instruct-
123 ed that no one might impart to another, a stranger, more than half of what he knew. Moreover, no young person dared to speak at all of the supernatural, and such matters as inheritance were regulated by the laws of the gods and ancestors, who punished infractions with the scourge of kunu—a term we were to hear so much in this Suriname bush.

302 Tenye's head as we looked down upon it was a mound of wool, with little braids, each no more than an inch or an inch and a half long, fastened by a bit of black thread, each braid pointing upwards. This was called "tatafi," we knew, and to change the subject we talked about the styles of
[855] hairdressing. A child's hair usually was closely cropped, and the heads of both Yamati and Sabape looked as smooth as blackened gourds. Tenye's hair had been cut but a little while ago, a moon perhaps, when the braids had grown so long that it had been too much bother even to make the hair look well in the fashion of what was called the coiled head, or the earth furrow style. Both of these types of hairdressing consisted of braids which diverged from the center in many rows, appearing at the outer edge at intervals of one inch, or slightly more. These ends were caught up and rebraided around the head, to form either the one coil of "lollo 'ede," or the several coils of "gon wi." There were also the single long braids—the "pitto"—and the "pina bonsu" way of hair combing, where the head when properly dressed makes a design of narrow strips of scalp showing between flat ribbons of braids, which look like so many snake vertebrae, radiating from the middle of the head outwards.

"When you come back from up river, I will dress your hair," said Tenye to both of us. "You," she said, pointing, "will become an obia man in your white country, and you will look so well that your husband won't ever remember to go to his other wives."

302 But now Tenye's maternal aunt who had approached
754 unobserved came to call the children away. She was not in

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609 given to the white woman when she returned from up river,
304 yet with it all the thighs would still need to be cicatrized.

"Then," she said, speaking of the cicatrized thighs, "then he simply won't think of any one else, because among you, you will be the only one. We who all have the kamemba must see that it looks well, but you will be the only one."

3

123 The boys remained with us, amusing themselves by
609 giving us their words for the various objects about us.
[291] The strings about their waists, which formed their only
304 clothing, the fiber cord with the bell about Sabape's neck, the word for garter, and machete, and shoes, boxes, and water jar, and all else they could see were named. A flashlight was a diamond fire, and a collapsible chair a hammock chair, and if we showed them something they had never seen it was a *Bakra sani*—a white man's thing.

Sabape spoke little, for he was a timid child and looked sluggish. He had but few cuts on his body, while Yamati, who was about the same age, had already several fully outlined designs.

"Why have you nothing about your neck, Yamati?"

"Oh, but I have. I have cuts. You can either have an obia cut, or an *obia tetai*—a string. It is to make us live. All children have it."

"And when do they start making kamemba?"

"A long time ago they start. If it doesn't hurt too much, they cut one more, and soon one more. But if it hurts too much, they wait until . . . ," he said, finishing on the [195] word *te* . . . in the characteristic way of the grown narrator who uses the monosyllable to intensify space and time and danger and bounty.

123 Yamati found so much delight in his rôle as teacher that
609 he became stern with us and had us say the words over again and again. There was the word for firefly which pleased him not at all. "*Mi taki, mi taki-e, azoka-nyenye*—I say, I am saying . . . " ("if you would but listen," his voice

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implied), and he repeated the word over and over, until this led us to talk about singing, and at last we had them consent to dance susa for us. It had to be done very quietly, in the slight clearing in back of the shelter. Susa is an African dance. It is danced by men only, in pairs, and is something of a game. The one who wins "kills" his opponent. The earth spirits are said especially to like it, and it is danced in the fields or in the villages for them.

There they stood, Yamati and Sabape, facing each other, their enlarged navels almost touching. One agreed to be "in," and one "out," and as they began, their jaws came forward in a patterned, pugnacious way, and their arms moved to reproduce in pantomime shield and spear, while the feet crossed and recrossed.

Kesi-kesi g'a S'sa
Zond'o linga
Linga-li

The monkeys
Go to dance susa
Without rings.

Huh, huh, huh!

They sang the song over and over again, panting at the end of each verse to dramatize combat.

"I killed him," said Yamati. He had won, and they began again. If the one who had agreed to be "in" had his foot on the outside as they clashed, then he lost—he was killed.

4

As they were dancing, we noticed a young man we had never seen before. He was standing watching the youngsters at their play, smiling as though he enjoyed their contest. He was very dark, even for a Bush Negro, short and stocky, with unusual muscular development of arm and chest and thigh. His age, one would judge, was nineteen or twenty. He turned his smile on us when he realized we were noticing him.

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WHILE THE RIVER WAS HIGH

Had we provided ourselves with the necessary obias with which to travel to the country of the Granman? He had never been so far up the river. He would like to go there. Ai-yo! He would like to go and see Dahomey, the sacred city, and look at the Tapa Wata falls, and visit the Granman's village. Did we have all our paddlers? He was strong, and he liked to make a boat walk up the rapids. He could get his father to come with him as steersman. His father had strong obias and knew the river. We could not go until the river went down, but he would stay with us here and wait, and if we wished it he would go back upstream to his village and get his father and food, and be ready for us in time. He needed the money the Bakra would pay, too, for he wanted to be married soon, and he would have to buy many things for his woman and her mother.

When he left us, he went to one of the little enclosed houses that were there for travelers, choosing the one closest to us, and built a small fire. His younger brother and the white dog that came in his boat sat with him. The dog wore a cord about his neck, covered with red ochre, to keep him safe in the bush. That night as we ate we could see Bayo, his brother, and the dog squatting close to the fire and eating, too. And all the next day, and for several days to come, as we waited, Bayo was with us, talking, laughing, explaining, and making and buying obias for us to carry us safely on our journey to the Granman.

5

In the afternoon one of the political chiefs of the neighboring Christian village came to hear our phonograph. But when we asked him to sing into it, he said, "Ask me later. Now I am alone. We Saramacca people never do anything when we are alone." We had the year before acquired a powerful obia against slander and bearing false witness against us, and found the occasion useful for corroborating the invocation we had been given. The man, however, spoke with the greatest reluctance and looked

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609 vastly relieved when he saw several boats pull up at the
123 shore.

It appeared that these newcomers were also interested in our phonograph, but that no one would consent to be the first to sing, until at last a young boy came up.

609 "I'll sing for you," he said, and it was at once whispered
123 that the boy came from a family of powerful obia men, that
971 he was sure of his spirit. "I'll sing, yes, but you must let me tell the machine something first."

What he said was an invocation to his soul and his personal gods, and he spoke it by putting his face into the horn of the phonograph and talking in a rapid whisper, making audible the one phrase: "Bakra obia isn't my obia." Subsequently when we discussed this occurrence with older men, they made the matter clear to us. He had assured his spirits that he was not conceding anything to our magic, and that they were neither to feel slighted nor to relax their vigilance. The gods favored the strong and the proven, and a young man had to be careful, for the gods were not conceived as especially logical or rational or inexorably just, so that one had to guard against becoming the victim of their caprice.

609 Boat after boat pulled up at the shore, and up the road
123 came a long line of callers. Women with infants straddling their backs, a breast drawn to the side so that the child might feed as it rested there; children with cords about their waists; young girls and boys, each with a square of apron across the front, or a loin cloth; and the men with togas and paddles, dignified and solemn, drawing nearer silently.

On our provision boxes sat those who had come early, particularly women nursing children, or old women who looked on with tired wonder. On the floor everywhere about our feet and against the posts sat the children we knew, while those who had come for the first time and were still fearful kept their distance, hiding behind some relative.

It was a great occasion, a spectacle of white man's magic, and they were there to verify it for themselves. Now there

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was much of white man's magic that was not astonishing. Old men and young men had heard of machines with people on them that flew like birds, but had they not their own stories about the sacred vulture, the *opete*, that carried one of their warrior ancestors away from slavery across the river and into this bush? He had simply mounted the bird and said to it, "On your back is my home. You can fly over land, and you can fly over water. I have no boat. You must carry me." And the opete took him. Then there are beings with wings that range the sky, and some of them are birds, and some of them are spirits. No, a machine that flew like a bird was not astonishing magic. Then there was the kino—shadows appearing and moving about like the living—that you could see in the cities. Men on the French shore, too, had seen the kino, but it was a gift any man might have to see things. But here was something which talked back at you. . . .

"Ke . . . !"

"Massa Nen'ge!—Master Nigger!"

"Ma Nen'ge . . . !"

And even our town servant exclaimed, "*Mi Gado*—My God!"

Now all this was very well, except that the Bakra, not satisfied with the ordinary seketi dance tunes, kept asking for Kromanti songs—the warrior-spirit songs—and the bush-god songs, and river-god songs. From one man and from another came the expected, "I do not know such songs." The women did not even dare approach the machine.

At last Apanto came. His hair was braided and he wore a jaguar tooth on a cord about his neck. He was not so muscular as other men of his age, and when he went about there was a softness in his movements that was unaccountably disquieting. His hands were not the hands of a worker of lumber, nor of a boatman who was accustomed to pole heavily loaded boats. They were smaller, and his fingers were narrow at the ends. Apanto, we discovered later, was what the Bush Negroes called a "tiger fighter." In a quarrel, he did not cuff and strike out with his fists, but

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609 scratched like a "*tigri*"—a tiger, for this is how the Bush
• 123 Negroes name the jaguar. Later, when we saw him dance
115 the Tigri Kromanti dance, we witnessed one of the most realistic feline interpretations imaginable. But that is another matter.

Now Apanto was an obia man to be reckoned with, and his fellow villagers and the villagers of neighboring settlements treated him with a deference that his age alone could never have commanded. And it was this Apanto who now came up and said that he would sing the sacred Kromanti songs for our phonograph.

"You will not understand the songs. They will be in the Kromanti language," he warned us. "They are strong, and the machine must be strong to carry them."

It happens that a field phonograph is anything but strong. The mechanism is simple, since the instrument must be light enough to be carried about, and yet it often is subjected to all manner of hard usage. To this is added the
[126] hazard of the climate. The turntable is actuated by a belt running from the mechanism inside the case, and the ends of this belt are glued together. This, to be sure, we discovered later. At the moment, we met Apanto's challenge with assurance. We did not doubt that the machine was spiritually strong.

126 What he said about the Kromanti language was true.
533 The Kromanti tongo, of which we had been told during our
[197] first visit here, we were finding to be an actuality, and
539 although we took down the words as he sang them, aided in hearing them by the repetitions, their meaning was unknown to us. Some of them we learned later. Some of them we knew. "Obia" we knew concerned the spirit,
[176] the vague force known by that name, while "Amba" was
[551] a deity sacred to Saturday, and was given as a "day name" to women born on that day of the week. This, then, is what he sang:

"*Ma djeni ye-ye*
Obia kule ma djeni no-ho
Obia mo-ye

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126 Apanto looked at us. "The Bakra is cunning," he
533 repeated. "But obia is stronger. In the bush obia rules.
●123 Kromanti is too strong for the spirit of the machine."

Swiftly the dark of the bush came down. The people who had been watching, listening to what had passed, were leaving to go to their villages and to spread the news of the power of obia, and how Apanto had defeated the spirit of the machine that talks back what has been said to it. And with the gathering dark, we could sense the pulse of the drums and hear a faint echo of the shrill cry of the women dancing at Gankwe for the spirit of the dead man who lay there in the house of mourning.

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had not acted well toward the Granman. It would be best if we did not stop there. At the others the Granman could assure us hospitality. Then there was talk of hauling wood and making rafts, for our host, who knew these people well, moved safri, too, until he at last felt the moment had come to talk about buying a boat from Ajako.

When the arrangements of the sale were concluded, Ajako came back to talk with us. He had heard that we had a machine which the Kromanti spirit had broken, was it true? Did it really go again? They said the Bakra had much cunning. They said the Bakra knew African magic.

The Bakra said he knew something about Africa. The Ashanti people, for instance, were a fine people.

"*Ma na Asante, na Sa'macca sem-* . . . —But the Ashanti are Saramacca. . . . " But he would go no further, having spoken only one syllable of the word for people. He became guarded. Yes, there were some Anago people from Africa on this Saramacca River, and Dahomey, and Loango, and Fanti; the Ibo peoples were not on this river. . . . And again he would say no more. Later, when we had changed the subject, he said as if in both gratitude and explanation, "*Na sa-i-'akisi, a tranga poi*—You ask about strong things."

But he would sing into our machine, if we liked. He would sing Kromanti, if we wanted him to do so. "I won't fight your machine," he said, smiling.

"*Anabobi, Anabobi,*
Anabobi, Anabobyo,
Tata Ando.
Anabobi, Ando,
Anabobi,
Tata Adjaini,
Anabobyo
Tata Fa'aku."

"They will understand this in Africa," he said, gravely, and then he moved toward the doorway and stood there

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KUNU

"*Na wa' taki: Efi gbuli wolo, i sa si san de na ini.*—It is said: If a person stirs up a hole, he will find what is in it." 538

And so it was that very night, when we were camped on an island near the great falls, with the roar of the water sounding in our ears like the very signal drums we were told the river gods wanted sounded that the sun might come and warm and dry them after the long rains, that we learned more. Kasanya, the captain of the fourth boat, had conducted himself so unobtrusively that we barely knew he was there. He was almost as old as Bibifo, but strangely silent. He was tall and spare, with graying hair, and eyes that were rimmed with red. We had not sought him out particularly to make conversation with him because he had ugly, open sores on his body, the result of a virulent case of bush yaws, which showed when he sat paddling in his loin cloth. We had known him during our first year when he had been more willing to be friendly, more ready to talk. From him, in fact, we had learned to play one of the Bush Negro games that the ancestors had brought from Africa. 124 [177] [524]

Kasanya came over to ask us whether we had medicine for him. His head ached so until . . . he could barely see. There is that about white man's medicine in the bush, it is to be had free, and there is no harm in trying it. 123 609

"Will you make us a game board like the one we bought from your village last year, Kasanya?" we asked him.

"Yes, but you must have two of them, one flat and one curved like a boat. It is not good to have only one. When a man is alive he plays the game. When he dies and comes back to visit the living, he wants to play, too. Now if there is a board for him, he will play on that. But if there is but the one, he will play with the living and that is not good." 775 524

"You know a great deal, Kasanya."

"Awa, yes, but I'm an old man already. I've had much trouble. Last year after you left the third son I made died. Now I have no one. Kunu has taken the three of them, and my wife is asleep, too." [976]

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gods do not come to them." There was in her voice contempt for women who had no gods. She was of a reddish-brown color, taller and more slender than most, and the great coils of brass about her arms and ankles told that her beauty had had full recognition. These had come to her at marriage, as had the small earrings of gold which the bassia had brought to her from French Guiana. With these, too, had come cloths and handkerchiefs, beads and carvings.

If white women had no gods, did they know any of the other things which women must know? Did the white woman wear an apron underneath all her cloths, as women should? Were her thighs cicatrized? Did she cook for her husband, or other men, when she should be isolated in the special house provided for women's monthly visits? Did she purify herself with sacred clay when she emerged from isolation in order not to spoil her husband's obias, for which contact with a woman who has her menses is the deadliest taboo? Why, having borne children, did her figure not show it?

"Have you drums?" the bassia's wife asked. "Without drums, how do you pray? How do you dance?"

Dancing without drums availed nothing.

"White women have no gods. The gods do not come to them. They are not troubled by the need to dance. White women do not pray," she concluded, seeing that what dancing the white woman did could only be a feeble affair.

"I will send my son to your country. The men who go to the French shore say it is good to know how to count the white man's way. My woman-child I will never send," she finished with finality.

Now it was the white woman's turn to ask a few questions, having done explaining how her boots laced, and why it was that she was dressed very much as her husband was dressed.

The white clay in the hair and on the face of a small child was medicine. The child's mother had washed for her god that morning. He was a god whose day for dancing was Wednesday, and now, feeling the god stir in her, she would

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834 848 "Don't go off into the bush with a man. A child born to you will have a bad bush god, if you do," she added as an afterthought.

5

●123 177 In the other corner, Chief And'u, the bassia, and about half a dozen men were talking of the great book about their ancestors which the white man had.

"It is large so," said the chief to one of the older men, indicating an imaginary size which multiplied the size of the actual volume at least tenfold. "And people say it has in it pictures of the Apuku gods, small as we ourselves know them, and a picture of the evil Apuku who appear as fire in the distance. . . . Mati, white men have gone into the Kromanti houses in the country of our ancestors and have made pictures!"

"It is impossible!"

"I want to see!"

The old man said, "I will not look. Books are not for us, mati."

"But mati, the G'aman has heard, and he wants to see."

The old man shook his head. He would have nothing of pictures that figured what should never have been allowed to be photographed.

137 It seemed prudent to give the conversation a new turn. Down river, the men had said that a man of this village had lately found a new *neku* liana. Was it so?

"The man who found it was my son," said the old man, "you should have come for the dance. You would have seen [822] how we do things here in the bush. But pictures you could not take. No, mati, if you photograph, you take the soul."

824 796 The festivities for the find had been especially joyful, he explained, for the boy had only recently come by his gods, and this had been yet another proof that he would serve his family capably. For though the find was his own, all [278] [226] his relatives in the mother's line would enjoy its use. Hereafter, when the poison of its leaves and its slender branches

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535 men's Kromanti society. The elders had decided these dances were too violent to show to the white man who was with them for the night. Whatever of the esoteric the white man was to see was for the Granman himself to decide. To introduce the drums for the secular dances, and the half-sacred awasa, would be dangerous, for once the drums were there, and the spirit seized one of the players, he would begin to call the gods. When the gods came the dancing would take place until the spirits were satisfied.

"There will be no drums," said the bassia aloud. "There is no one to play them."

No drums!

Again the whispering began. The eagerness, the energy which had seemed to float in the darkness from one to another of the waiting figures began to be dissipated. The men and women still waited, but they were listless.

533 539 The little girl sang,

"*The kogbwa drum*
Sounds Toné."

And the chorus sang,

"*Give us Toné.*"

The bassia who was master of ceremonies noticed the loss of interest with displeasure. It had not been the intention of the elders, when they had made this decision, to have it interfere with the reception of the strangers. He had counted on having spirited secular dancing.

"Friend," he said to the young obia man, "get the dancing started."

He turned again and again to the young man who was being disciplined in the way of the gods, exhorting him to beat time faster, to sing louder. And to the women he shouted, "Shake, women, shake—*chaka!*"

The dancing grew lively.

The white man had learned the words of the refrain, and [123] was singing with them. Master Nigger! here was a white man who could sing their songs. The white woman had

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been shown by the bassia's wife how to clap her hands to the rhythm of the song, and now she could not stop for an instant, though her hands ached.

"*Batu mau*—Clap your hands!" the bassia's wife called to her, the instant her visitor's zeal slackened. She herself was dancing in place, her infant on her back, sound asleep.

"*Chaka*—Shake!" she too began to shout, and once she was so carried away by her hand clapping that she joined the dancers, and danced facing the obia man.

Tall and slender as she was, she crouched opposite the man, her child on her back, and executed the most amazing steps. It was as though every muscle in her body had been set in motion by some invisible dynamo.

An old woman interrupted them. She stepped into the circle, and put her arm about the bassia's wife. "Adoo!" she crooned, and brought her to her feet. Another woman had done the same for the obia man.

Now one of the men who wore both a love obia and a brass ring on his great toe began a song. The melody was only a variant of the one Bayo had sung and the seketi songs we had heard at Gankwe and elsewhere. But here the recitative of the leader was longer. What he sang was not unlike one of our own ballads. He recounted the experiences of a young Saramacca man on the Marowyne River. He had met a Djuka woman, who had taken up with him for his money, and in the end she had exposed him to her people.

Another man sang of a war that white men had with each other. Hard times came to the Saramacca people. There was no work. Then their Granman sent a message to the white elders. The Granman told them people should live in peace together.

The bassia had no need now to spur on the dancers. The small open space was a heaving mass. Nothing seemed immobile. The stars darted, the lights of the small oil lamps held by the bystanders flickered, the very posts which held the thatch of the houses in place and ended some feet

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Chapter X

AT THE COURT OF THE GRANMAN

I

"AT BREAK of day I start for the country of the Granman. I will see you there tomorrow, about the time day meets night," And'u, chief of S'ei, had said as he left the shrine to the Great Gods. Yet it was a full day later that we next saw And'u, for the speed at which two men could send a small corial upstream was not that at which our heavily loaded boats traveled. As the first day wore on and the succeeding one brought us closer and closer to our destination, it was evident that the news of the approach of the strangers had spread.

123 Report said that the white man had not come to bring his gods to them. He was not buying timber, he sought for no rubber trees, he was not here to tell them to grow new crops or to work gold. There were, in the white man's country, people who wanted to learn how other people lived. In the white man's country there were people who believed that men brought from the country of the great Negro ancestors had become Indians, or whites.

Master Nigger! They, the Saramacca people, become Ingi or Bak'a!

But why did people go about learning how others lived—Indians, and coolies who were brought to work the white man's plantations when their ancestors had won their freedom, and Negroes? Did white men grow rich doing this? Would this white man put their carvings in the big

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house he told of, beside carvings of their Negro ancestors, and then ask money from people who came to see?

Ambe! Was that what white people did to come into money?

From the provision grounds canoes filled with women would dart toward us, and Bayo would call to us, as the women cried their greetings, "Stand up, both of you. The women want to look at you."

The women's requests were, apparently, not to be ignored. Hurriedly we would climb out from inside the tent and balance ourselves on our knees over the tarpaulin-covered load in front of the boat.

"Look! Look! . . . . There are two men! It is not true that the white man brought his woman!"

Like a master showman, Bayo would stand there in the bow, his pole-stick poised for the next stroke, all his teeth showing.

"Take off your sun helmet, white woman," he would then say.

"Mother of all Negroes!"

"By Ando!"

"Her hair is yellow! She belongs to the river gods!"

"Is it that way they live in the white man's country? Do they not know the difference between men and women, that they both dress alike?"

Again Bayo had a ready answer.

"A white woman who travels in the bush dresses like a man. So they do in the white man's land."

"Master Nigger! Men and women wearing the same clothes!"

When Bayo decided that the women's curiosity had been satisfied, he would say his goodbyes to them with a flourish and, bearing down on the top of his pole-stick, would push away.

Soon we would hear Bayo's summons again.

"Come out. People want to see you."

This time there would be both men and women in the boats which had come circling about us, and the questions, exclamations, and Bayo's replies were heard afresh.

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stopped to change their clothes, and make themselves fit for the reception by the Granman.

We had been warned that these preparations were not to be slighted. Those who had been to the village of the Granman told many stories of the impressiveness of the ceremonial life, and the dignity of those who were there. It was the seat of government, the home of a potentate. A visitor, whether a village chief or a man from the city, had to keep in mind that he was to appear at court. Etiquette demanded that the traveler, once arrived at the island which now hid us from the Granman and his assembled villagers, debark, remove the stains of hard traveling, and dress in a manner befitting the reception which awaited him.

But the gods had planned otherwise.

At this time of the year, though the heavy rains were over and the showers were becoming less and less frequent, it did sometimes happen that the clouds gathered at midafternoon and rain fell. To the northeast, behind us, we had seen the clouds massing, and now they hung low and glowering.

"It will rain," Sedefo called to us, just as we were making ready to see to a change of clothes, and an instant later the storm broke. With a kind of hurricane force which sent the branches toward the earth, and flares of lightning and crashes of thunder, the deluge was upon us. Not since our first days in the bush had we coped with a rain like this. The water poured down as though some giant hands were turning over endless vessels. Our tent seemed to have been taken as unaware as we were, for having sheltered us in many hard storms, it was now inadequate to keep out the downpour. We drew our raincoats tighter about us to keep off the water which came through the thatch.

Under the trees of the island the Bush Negroes were huddled. Their favorite top cloths were still in their baskets, safe out of the wet under the white man's tarpaulins. No chance now to put them on, or to use the oil which they had jealously saved for making their faces and

123 [302] shoulders and arms glisten, or otherwise to make themselves presentable for the reception. There was nothing to do but to keep close to a tree-trunk, water dripping from naked body and the strip of twisted loin cloth, teeth chattering in the sudden chill brought on by the storm.

The head of Sungi was suddenly thrust inside our boat-tent.

"I saw the Granman. He says the storm is passing. You are to come to him as you are. It is best so. Waiting here is cold."

Turning, he ordered the paddlers to their places, and almost before the paddles were in motion, the guns began to fire.

"The Granman knows the time it takes to give a message. The Granman knows everything," said Bayo in great admiration, as the guns saluted. [203]

Three shots, and three more. Two shots, an interval, and another coming faintly. Then a short silence, and once more the guns, in clusters of three, but now sounding from several directions.

As we rounded the bend of the island the farther bank was alive with people. The rain had subsided to a drizzle. Across the strip of water which separated us from the shore we could see men and women and children standing about, the women with large food trays inverted over their heads to protect their finery. But the men, disdaining such aids, stood in the rain and looked on with undisguised curiosity. Boats joined ours from up and down the river. With the sound of the guns came hallooing, shrill cries which were the women's expression of enthusiasm, actual or ceremonial.

292 554 622 As we watched, several figures appeared on the high bank, the others making way for them. Two of the men were not dressed in the colored toga-like cloths that were worn by the others, but in coats of rich material which reached to their knees. They wore black top-hats with cockades at the side. One of these, we recognized as Chief And'u of S'ei. His coat was of deep crimson, bordered in blue, and his companion's a vivid yellow. Both of these men carried

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to him when the drums called that god, could not be held accountable for what he did while his god had him in his control.

No stranger, no man who came to live in his wife's village, even though he had spent a good part of his life there, took it upon himself to offer advice to his wife's family. Again and again we would hear from men and women on the river, "In our village we do it this way," or, "We only carry the corpse on the head twice. Our spirits don't like to be troubled more often," or, "Mawu as a name for the Great God is used in our village, but not everywhere on the river."

There was the experience with several sacred images of village gods we had bought from an upper-river village. Our paddlers refused to carry them for us from the village to the boats, and it was with marked uneasiness that they permitted us to put them into the boats.

"We do not know what these gods can do. We do not know what is hateful to them. They are the gods of another people. We won't carry them."

But with the *gomi*—the child of the village of his mother's family, it was quite otherwise. He was a member of the village, he had a voice in its governing, he knew its gods. If he belonged to the family of the chief of the clan, if, let us say, his older brother were the chief, or if he was one of several nephews of a chief who had no surviving brothers, then at the death of the chief there would be a krutu, and the men of the village would decide which one of the several men who were eligible for the office was the most capable. Though rank was hereditary there was always selection among several heirs, and again the final word rested with the people of the clan. The offices of lesser chiefs—village chiefs who were subject to the clan chief, or bassias who served the chiefs—were passed on in the same manner.

While law making was in the hands of the chiefs, or captains, and the krutu over which they presided, law enforcement was the task of the bassias. It was they who saw to it that the orders of the chiefs were carried out. When

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643 "True, true, G'aman."
82 "Captain And'u, the gods sent the rain to cool every-
716 thing when the Bak'a came. The gods of the river carried
623 the Bak'a without mishap. We have heard of what the Bak'a has done. He has been at your country, at S'ei. He says he comes to learn. He says he does not come to buy wood or to work gold. What he says is good. Yet a full creek does not clear the bank of weeds. Tell us what the Bak'a did in your country, Captain And'u."

609 "The Bak'a came to S'ei. All that was there he looked
●123 at. He walked about the village. His woman talked to our
623 women. The Bak'a spoke with our men. He asked about the obias in the krutu house. His woman asked our women about their gods. What was the name of the wife of the Gran Gadu, he wanted to know."

With every sentence, came the affirmation of the chief.

"So I know."

"So it is."

"By Ando!"

"So I heard."

And'u continued. "The Bak'a knows the land of the Negroes—*a sabi Afrika*. With him he has a great book. In it he has pictures."

"True, true."

"There are pictures of obias."

"Ya-hai!"

"There are pictures of the Kromanti houses."

"So it is!"

"There are pictures of people who have the gods."

"*Kweti-kweti*—No, no!"

"Yet pictures in S'ei the Bak'a did not make. The Bak'a said, 'If your ancestors tell you not to talk, do not talk. But when you talk, do not lie!' That which we did not wish to be done he would not do, his woman would not do."

"Gbolo!" exclaimed the Granman, "this is as I have heard. Now the Bak'a has come up the river. His woman has light hair, she is as our Toné people. The river has
[716] treated the Bak'a well. The gods of the river have let the Bak'a pass.

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Bak'a pass. Friends, the river is more than I am. . . . Let us hear what the Bak'a has done on the river. Friend Kasanya, you have traveled with the Bak'a. Speak of what he has done."

"It is as Captain And'u has said," Kasanya began, "what was forbidden, the Bak'a did not do."

The Granman interposed an objection.

"I sent a message to the Bak'a by the husband of my daughter. To him I said, speak to the Bak'a, say that at all villages on the Saramacca you will be received. But two villages have not walked well with the G'aman. At those you will not stop. Yet at one of them the Bak'a stopped."

"So it is, cunning master. This was how it happened. Darkness was falling. Everywhere was the big bush. A storm was on its way."

"So I know."

"There were no other villages near. The next one could only be reached after dark. There were bad rapids ahead."

"So I understand."

"The Bak'a woman was in the boat. To make camp before the storm came was not possible. We had a krutu. We spoke with the Bak'a. The Bak'a said we must go where we could find a roof."

The Granman grunted, was silent for a moment, then took up the story.

"Friends, night overtook the white man in the bush. He had a woman with him. The men said they could not make camp at night. The white man took his woman to where there was shelter. Into the village he did not go. At the first house he slept. Early in the morning he left. He does not know the river. The men brought him at dark to the forbidden village. The gods sent a great wind when the Bak'a crossed the river to show their displeasure, but the Bak'a and his woman they did not harm. The gods took it into their hands. The gods are more than I am."

"So it is, G'aman."

"Friends, the children of the bush know what is done in the bush. Yet a man's lips must speak for himself. Let

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609 the Bak'a himself tell why he has come the long way to the
603 Saramacca river and what it is he seeks."

123 There was a general chorus of agreement, and silence awaited our accounting.

As the town man began to repeat our words to the Granman, the quiet of the house was heightened by an occasional stirring outside the paling. From where we sat, we could see brown motionless feet, which told us that there were many more than those inside, who were listening to the white man's reason for being in the bush.

Again the Granman made the traditional responses.

"So it is, white man."

"True, what you have said, bassia."

Finally our telling was at an end. Again there was a silence as we sat, tensely waiting.

The Granman again broke the silence.

"Friends, chiefs, you have heard. The white man is here. He comes to learn of our life. The gods of the river have
[906] brought him and his woman safely. The Great God sent the
821 rain to cool the air when he reached Asindopo Lantiwe.
803 The gods are more than I am. The river is more than I am. But the Saramacca people are also more than I am. It is you, headmen of the Saramacca people, who must speak."

"Ai, G'aman," said the man who had the stripes of white on him and who wore the many obias. "But have the ancestors spoken?"

"Truly you ask, friend," was the response. "It is well that you think of these things. In the bush, we think before we speak. Do you go aside and consider well."

Slowly the members of the krutu arose from their
[576] benches. Softly, with bent form, each passed out of the doorway. We were alone with the Granman, who waited with us for the reply of the chiefs.

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623 As the elders slowly filed out of the council house, it was
693 as though a jury were leaving the courtroom to decide a case which had been laid before it. And as we learned more,

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treated with obia. An obia man now addressed the woman who denied the charge that had been lodged against her, restating the accusation and her denial. Then he asked her once more if she were guilty, and when the answer was still "No," the test was applied.

Through the woman's tongue the quill of the feather, which had been treated with magic, was thrust. When the entire length of the feather had passed through the tongue, then it was that the proof was had. If the woman's tongue neither swelled nor showed blood, she was innocent.

But whether it be trial by ordeal or through the taking of testimony, punishment by the krutu went along with punishment by the spirits. Only incest, we learned, was not punishable by the court. That was for kunu alone to avenge.

6

Once more the krutu was in session. Where the men had "gone aside," we did not know, but while we sat in the krutu house, alone with Moana Yankuso, we heard nothing.

The Granman had spoken little. Were our hammocks tied well the night before? Were we satisfied with the arrangements he had made for the storing of our supplies?

What were the elders deciding? We could not but wonder with anxiety. Would this krutu, after the fashion of the bush, where time meant so little, come to no decision? Was the answer to be one that had been previously arranged?

Chief Sungi was the first to speak.

"G'aman, we have gone aside. Your captains and bassias have spoken together. We say, the white man has come. The white man must eat. Let all be told to bring gifts, that you may feed those who have come to you."

"So it is," was the Granman's response. "Friends, great thanks to you. What you have said is good. Let all return to their villages. Let all tell their people that the white man has come. Let all come with gifts, that we may eat."

There was a chorus of affirmations. The Granman arose.

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"White man," he said, "I have told the young men to hunt, I have told them to fish. My captains, who are here, are going to their villages. You have heard. Their women will come with rice. The young men will bring their kill. So it is in the bush. So G'aman Yankuso holds those who come to him."

As the elders, each with his word of leave taking, left the house to us, we thought of the Granman's last words and of the verdict of the krutu. We had sat long enough in this assembly to realize the circumlocution which went with all statement, and we tried to decipher the cryptic words of the chiefs. Was it a verdict at all? Or was it merely a way of refusing to come to any decision when the white man sat in the krutu which was deciding the fate of his visit? That the decision would be reflected in the attitude of the people of the village seemed reasonable to suppose. And so, drawing aside the curtain which hung over the door, we went out into the open square before our house to see what the krutu had decided.

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When a male snake god came, then it was easy to know, the women said. If the possessed one rolled face downward it was a male god, and he was courting the spirits of the earth, but if face upward then it was a female snake. "*Na muye opo-i-mbe gi 'a tapu*—The woman opens her womb for the sky," they said, using the precise image for one who was being wooed by the spirits who lived above.

3

When the white woman was about to enter the council house, Granman Yankuso called to her. He was standing in front of his house, surrounded by women, who were talking to him in low, excited voices.

"*Bak'a muye*—White woman," he said, looking at her searchingly, and saying nothing. "White woman," he repeated, after a short silence, "white mother, good morning. Are you awake?"

His voice sounded a little troubled, but not unfriendly. It helped the white woman to regain her self-possession.

"They sing well down below, Granman," she said, and went into the council house.

4

Whatever Granman Yankuso thought of the white woman's having witnessed the possession of the women of his village, he did not refuse permission to her and her husband to return to the hut.

Amasina and Affi were still in the clearing, dancing to their own songs. Women came up with their children, bringing more and more calabashes of rice. Amasina took up each child in her arms, and caressed it gently, streaking it with the white clay as she did so, and singing the while,

"*I come from the river.*
You shall be cooled,
You shall be well."

Affi's moaning had become more and more faint, and her pacing, by this time, was listless. Her god would not take

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her into his power strongly enough to give her the release she craved. 787

Amasina sang,

"*I come from the river.*
I tell all you people,
This man, this woman
Are friends. [539]
They come not for evil.

Go to the G'aman,
Say to him.
These people are friends,
They bring us no evil."

Then her god, speaking through her, sang an explanation to the white people. From the river he came, bringing healing to all those who were fevered, caring for all those who were sick. Those who could, came to him, but those who could not come, he would visit and bring them healing. Now he must make the round of the village, go to the houses, and see those who were ill.

Singing, Amasina beckoned us to follow her, and as she led the way she danced in undulating steps from one end of the village to another, visiting the sick, singing the cure her god was bringing them in the words he was speaking through her.

The white people could stay with her no longer. Word came that the boat which was to take them across the river to the village of the Granman's father was ready, and they must go. The women suggested, however, that if the whites cared to make a gift to the god who had spoken so well of [123] them, it would be acceptable, and they hurried to their stores to get a gift.

As they passed the council house and turned toward the small hut behind it where their supplies were kept, they heard a new sound. It was a choking sound, torn from an unwilling throat. Seated quite alone on a low stool in front

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of the mortar in which she had been pounding maripa nuts was the Granman's younger wife. The pestle had fallen from her shaking fingers. She gave the intruders no attention, for she, too, was possessed by her god,—by Toné, god of the river.

"*Ke-ke-ke-ke-ke-ke! Ke-ke-ke-ke-ke-ke!*" The syllables fell from her and, as the white people stood by, her shaking stopped, the sounds did not go on. Then they began again, her body racked, her voice choked. The Toné people do not speak when they are possessed, it is through sounds such as these that the god of the river makes known his wishes.

Women came running toward us. "Your boat is ready, Bak'a," they said.

The whites returned with the bracelets to find that the two women to whom they brought their offerings had come as far as the Granman's quarter of the village. Affi's greeting of "Ondyi!" had died down to a whisper. Disconsolately she followed Amasina, who, in the white cloth which reached almost to her ankles, looked tall and sinuous, and moved as though there were something in the still air to send her body curving to one side and to the other.

As the possessed women and those with them entered the quarter, the elder wife of Yankuso came toward Amasina with a large calabash of rice.

"All those who have the same god come with gifts. Amasina has the strongest god of all. It is a white god," a woman explained.

White was the color for the ancestors, and hers was the god of a great priestess of the family. It was the god Towenu, the great Papa god, the giver of children, the jealous one, who came to her. If he cared for his priestess too well, he allowed her no children. The mention of his name the day before had brought him, and, coming, he vouched for the friendliness of the strangers.

Amasina put her arms about the older woman as she had done to the others who came to her. She sang once more her message:

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"Wife of the G'aman,
I come from the river.
Go to the G'aman
Say to him,
These strangers are friends,
They bring no evil."

It was the god speaking, and the Granman's wife received with lowered head the words spoken through the priestess.

"Ai, my master. Ai, Massa Gadu," she said.

5

The Granman's paternal village was directly across the river from Asindopo Lantiwe. It was called Akisiamau, literally "Took with an outstretched hand," but whether there was also some meaning in the phrase not intended for the uninitiated, we could not learn. In size it was not much larger than the Granman's village, and again and again we recognized houses which were his by the crest-like carvings on the doorposts, that reproduced the design found not only at the side of the council-house door, but at the door of all other houses at Asindopo Lantiwe which were his.

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Except for several old people who sat about in the shade and waited for the strangers to come to them with their greetings, the entire village followed us as we made our way down one path and another.

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"Bak'a, Ame'ika Bak'a, Ame'ika Fandya!—White man. American white man, American Fandya!" the children called after us, as they ran at our heels, touching our canteens, our sun helmets, and shoes.

The Granman had spoken with especial fondness of his father's house, and it was there that we asked first to be taken. It was not occupied, we were told, and none might enter it. Above the top crosspiece white cotton was draped. Except that its door was closed, it showed no signs of being

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"The openings in the wall there," she explained, when we asked her about the two squares cut into the wall behind the altar, "are for all things that fly. In this place they must come and go as they like. Bats come here, and insects of all kinds, and when they want to go back to the bush, they must be able to go as they like. That is the wish of the gods. So they told us long ago."

6

We were led from house to house. The gods had spoken. We were friends, and as friends who came not to harm, we were given the hospitality of friendship. There were other shrines, but we did not have to ask about them. They were pointed out to us with the other sights of the village.

The closed low hut near the Apuku shrine we had entered was to the river god Toné. It was a very small enclosure, and before it was a plant which covered the low entrance. It belonged, we were told, to an albino woman who was possessed by Toné. But she was not in the village now. Farther down the path was a larger house, another shrine. This had a piece of iron over the door and, when we asked about it, the girls who were following us ran, and the men merely said that it was the place of the Kromanti obia and passed on.

As we continued on our way, each woman was anxious not to have us slight the house her man had built her or fail to admire the carvings that were inserted into the weave of the palm walls. The huts were swept clean—the cleanliness of the entire village was even more striking than that of others we had visited—and but for a few stools, which were brought out for the strangers while they spoke with the old people who lived in the quarter, they were entirely bare. In every house, however, there was sure to be a shelf, large or small, or several shelves, on which stood prized food trays with carvings which covered both inner and outer surfaces. Combs and food stirrers were taken down and shown us, and the calabash dishes made by the women

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173 With this obia, and unafraid, Apatu went. He reached the French shore, and found work. Years later he was asked to guide an expedition against the Indians. They came to a cave. At the other end of it Indians waited with their poisoned arrows.

The French officer said to him, "Apatu, are you afraid?"

"I will go, I am not afraid of death," Apatu said to the officer.

He led the way through the cave, calling out, "Mafi, Yanku na'a, hi!"

Three times the Indians tried to shoot him, and each time they failed.

"The French officer gave Apatu a gold piece for saving his life. That was when they sent him to Pali, and it was written down that he was a great man," ended the Granman.

7

822 "Do you know what they asked me in the city when I was there?" the Granman said one day, when his elders assembled. "'Chief Yankuso,' they asked me, 'which is better, light or darkness?' I said to them, I said, 'Darkness is better. When it is day we work and we struggle. At night we go into our hammocks with our women, and we find peace.'"

He turned to us as he told the story.

"Is it not so, white man? You yourself are young."

8

● 123 197 A few days after the gods had spoken, the Granman asked us if we would that evening show the pictures of the country of the Negroes which we had brought. We had shown him earlier the simple projector, actually a flashlight with a lens attached, through which a roll of film passed to flash images, one by one, on a screen. On the film were photographs of illustrations from books on Africa.

Mechanical objects of all kinds fascinated these men of the bush, and they would ask again and again to see our flashlights or the inside of our phonograph. Though un-

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willing to touch the phonograph, they never tired of hearing about its mechanism and how it was that a voice was recorded and instantly reproduced. But the mystery of the moment was this projector.

We had delayed showing these photographs as long as we could, for what leads we could get to African survivals, we sought, for many reasons, to get singly. Not the least of these reasons was that the Bush Negro, who knew the method of krutu, did not allow himself to be impulsive in new situations, especially if they involved strangers. If something unfamiliar was presented, he wanted time to think and to krutu about it with others of his kind. Memories of the early experiences of their people seemed always to be stirring to make the most genial man, or a very pleasant old woman, fall silent and resort to the phrase, "God alone knows." Men, in particular, and often women, too, seemed to be posing to themselves a mute, anxious question: Was it well for the white people to know so much about them? Even when whites came as friends, as the gods attested, was it well to speak that fraction of their knowledge which the ancestors permitted? For generations they had lived with the feeling that their deep, deep Saramacca language was their own, its knowledge the wisdom of their own people, and here were strangers, speaking to them in their own tongue more easily as day followed day. Was it well? Men taking a white man's boat up and down the river could say what they chose, and the white man who traveled with them did not understand. What if this were to end?

We were constantly made to feel the effect of these doubts in the minds of the people.

"They say here," said Fenekonde one day, "when you get back to your white country, you will have much knowledge to profit you. The two of you will be able to talk Saramacca, and no one at all will know what you say."

Other things were said.

"At the krutu they said, these white people might have been sent by others, as soldiers with toys."

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123 "You must have strong obia from Africa—strong snake
177 obia—for the gods to have spoken so well of you!"

But when the Granman asked, there was no refusing. That day word was sent to all in the village that the Bakra was giving a cinema show in the bush.

Long before dark the entire village had gathered in front of our doorway. The children had been around since early afternoon. Against the council-house wall we hung a white sheet, and some feet away we stood our folding table and on it the little projector. The show was about to begin.

[354] The Granman who sat a little to one side gave orders to the latecomers to extinguish the flames of their small oil lamps and their lanterns, and the large torch which he had so proudly shown that first night, and which had since illuminated the clearing nightly, was also extinguished.

The illustrations we had photographed were from volumes on the people of the West Coast of Africa—Ashanti and the Gold Coast, Dahomey, Nigeria, Benin, the Cameroons, Loango, and the Congo. Our first year's experiences among these people had taught us that it would not be well to show them too many ceremonial pictures. Photographs of sacrifices of animals other than fowls, we had felt, too, would not be wise to introduce. Such a picture as that of the Ashanti Sasabonsum, the "evil Apuku," as the Bush Negroes whom we had allowed to see the illustration named it, we had also decided should best be shown to individuals here and there. For the general showing, we relied upon pictures of cicatrizations, of hairdressing and teeth filing, of rafts floating on African lakes, of pottery making and cloth weaving, of laying fires and the doing of other household tasks, of carvings, and finally of one or two priests and priestesses in states of possession.

[342] We waited for a signal from the Granman to begin. About the dark clearing the huts, with their roof poles meeting on top like great horns, gave a strange effect to the scene, for with the moving and shifting of bare feet it seemed as though everything in that clearing strained to fall in line

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with the white curtain hanging against the wall of the council house. To one side was the image of the Sky God, tall almost as the big bush which stood about the clearing, and beside it the pole for the Earth Mother. People went from one side of the improvised screen to the other, with no mental image to tell them where they should look or what they might expect to see. Something of fear went with their expectancy.

The Granman nodded, and the pictures began to appear.

"Mati, did you see how they lay the fire?"

"Mother of all Negroes, what great breasts the women have!"

"See them getting the cassava ready! Look, they use the bark for a container!"

"Master Nigger! They know something there in the land of our ancestors. Men know how to weave cloth!"

"See the braids. They are handsome in our ancestral land. The head looks like a carved calabash!"

"Massa Nengere! That's the way to take lumber down! Not one raft at a time, or two, mati. Four at a time. They are workmen there, I tell you! Our ancestors used to say there was wealth there!"

We had usually to tell them what the picture showed, for they had not the habit of looking at these images and would stand to one side, or bend low and look up at the screen. But once we named the picture—"This is the head of a woman," or "This is timber going down to the city," or "This is a path through the bush"—then it was they who began to describe aloud what they saw, exclaiming over the resemblance to their own paths, or to their own manner of burning pots, or to their own way of preparing food.

"Mati, friends," said the Granman, "here deep in the Saramacca bush, all this has come to us. If I were a young man, I would go and see what goes on in the world. I would go to Africa. White man, how much gold does a man need to go to Africa?" After a short silence, he continued this train of thought. "What shall be done? Shall we go see the world?

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Here is our bush. Our gods are here, and our ancestors come at our call. There is the world—*na g'on tapu*. There is the land of our old ancestors."

He stopped and covered his face with his hands, remaining deep in thought. But when he spoke again, his voice was calm.

"Mati, let us see all that the white man has brought. Here deep in the bush, all this has come to us that even children might see. Let us see all."

On the screen appeared a priest. He wore a grass skirt used in a sacred dance, a skirt like the one we had had made for us here on the river, and his face was covered, mask-like, with white clay.

"Ai, mati," exclaimed the Granman, as everyone gasped at what they saw.

The next picture showed the same priest dancing. Two men held his arms.

"When Kromanti gets a man in the ancestral country, it comes so strong that he has to be held in check, friends. So it is here, too."

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So great was the fascination of the Granman and of all his people with the phonograph that many times we had occasion to feel if it were not for Apanto's curse, and the habit of elastic to stretch, and of glue to be affected by tropical heat, the machine would have overcome for us what distrust there was of our interest in their beliefs—that it might even have changed the decision of the ancestors when they were consulted by priests in Dahomey—a decision which ruled that the white man and his woman were not to be given the secrets of their worship.

Whatever the ancestors had told the men who carried on their heads the sacred plank which was used for consulting the ancestral will, the attitude of the people showed that the white man could not be received in the bush without distrust. The intentions of a white man might be friendly,

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yet his findings might in time serve the enemy. We were soldiers bringing toys, as the image of the krutu had suggested. 123

Since life in the bush, for strangers like ourselves, was lived in terms of days, and each day was taken for what it might bring, we were grateful to those gods who had spoken for us, and watched the effect of the ancestral edict.

Before dawn of the day which followed the ceremony of asking the will of the ancestors, men came to counsel with the Granman, and from then onward many men were about the village. The young boys found their toy guns again, and the little girls played on the river bank. The widow who was so susceptible to evil influences no longer appeared in the central clearing with her child on her back, stamping her rice, or drying her peanuts. Her door was shut. Fenekonde was no longer about, for she had gone to the menstrual house, and Tenemi who came to sweep the council house each morning now wore a new obia on a long, twisted, white cord, hung from shoulder to side. She was polite, formal, and she worked fast.

Late that afternoon the obia man who had appeared at the first council meeting with wide stripes of clay came again, and his wife accompanied him. They were the best diviners on the river. From the corner of the council house the large mat which had been standing rolled up was carried into a closed hut, so that he might sit on it, and perform his magic to see what the future held for the destiny of the Saramacca people, and what immediate threat the white man's coming boded. Before leaving for the hut where the mat was prepared the man and woman sat with us in the council house in the company of the Granman. They apparently needed to know our individual names for their task. While we sat there, the white woman absently began to play with the obia about her neck, and this seemed a signal for the other woman to take hers into her hands and begin to mutter an invocation, for the stranger's careless playing appeared to her as the white man's way of casting a spell. 123 791 787 [285]

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123 609 So it went. The Granman was still a considerate host, but he no longer came to regale us with stories. He was disturbed. Again and again we were assured by indirection that our own motives were not doubted. But in what seemed to them our very foolhardiness in coming that distance, and because we had showed no fear, we had proved that we were being made use of by those who would later show enmity toward them.

When men came whose allegiance would go to any man in power, himself or the next man, the Granman would exclaim with all his splendid oratory that the black man's cause never could be that of the white man. To men of his own village, like the captain who took us down the river, he gave instructions that our every wish was to be met.

It was the way of the politician—and it was more than that. He showed in his manner when he was alone with us that he was deeply puzzled. As a man who had learned to trust his judgments of people, his pride would not permit him to grant that his wits had failed him. Then, too, what he had heard from us had fired his imagination. That he was skeptical of the ancestral revelation, we do not believe, but it was possible that, with the Bush Negro concept of the world of the dead, he might have felt that the great ancestors who were consulted remembered their days of slavery, and would, therefore, never consent to the revealing of secrets to the white man.

10

123 199 It was our last night in the village of the Granman. In the council house more than thirty people were crowded, standing about the table on which we had placed the phonograph. The Granman sat in his folding chair and looked on without addressing himself to any one.

He had asked us to let all his people hear the machine. When we were gone, many people on the river would talk of it. He wanted all of his village to see how it worked.

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GRANMAN MOANA YANKUSO

"You will play everything, white man," he had told us earlier. He had been especially anxious that we play the songs we had recorded in Haiti on our way to Suriname. Often he had spoken of these songs to the chiefs at council meetings.

"White man, tell these friends the words of those songs in that foreign tongue."

He had wanted us to speak before these men the words Legba, a deity to them in the bush as he is in Haiti and in West Africa today, and Loko, and Aida Wedo, and to translate the words of the Haitian twin song we had recorded, and the one to the water god Simbi.

Now he sat in his folding chair and looked on in silence, his face thoughtful. The songs he heard moved him deeply, and his expressive face showed it.

When, in the Haitian songs, the women heard the word "Ago-e" which they recognized, they uttered a shriek. It was one of their many words for ancestors. They cried out again when they heard "Aida Wedo" pronounced, and "Loko." They, too, sang of Aida Wedo, and of Alado, and of Loko. Dan was one of their words for snake.

The white man asked permission of the Granman later to record some songs of the people of the village, and promptly Moana Yankuso addressed a man who stood by. The man was a good singer, and his seketi improvisations had made him a figure on the river.

"Sing for the whites, mati. Let them hear in their far country how our people sing. Let them know that we can sing, that we sing much."

The singer Mapasi sat down and began to sing. His voice was of fine quality, and he was as modest in the midst of all these women with this gift which the gods had given him, as had been the young dancer whom the Granman had summoned to dance for us. He sang in a low voice, and directly into the horn. Accompanying his singing was the hand clapping of the women, which in the small council house was deafening. His recitatives were the longest we had heard on the river, longer by far than those which had

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533 surprised us that night at S'ei, and when he paused for a
106 moment the women took up the chorus. From one song to
179 another he went, and the hand clapping grew louder, and the chorus joined in more frequently, often breaking into his recitative, so that there was harmonizing of theme and chorus.

Once or twice the Granman called for a song we had already recorded, in order to give Mapasi a rest.

"Play us something from the lower river, white man. Let them hear their own songs, too, sung by others."

When the excitement of hearing the machine reproduce the song they had just sung had grown less intense, the singers repeated the song the phonograph was reproducing for them, for to listen to music without singing was difficult for them, just as when they sang, they could not but move their feet, though there was scarcely more than room for them to stand one close to the other. But a Bush Negro needs little room for his dancing, so that as the phonograph played their songs for them, they clapped their hands and danced in place. For a short interval, at least, the existence of the whites was forgotten in their pleasure of singing with the machine.

Until late into the night we played our records for them, and they sang for us. Whatever the consequences to the frail records of soft wax, we decided to play as long as they would listen, because of something in the manner of the Granman, something of wistfulness, let us say, and something, perhaps, which went deeper yet, as he sat there—a black Hamlet following a mute soliloquy while he looked on with his clever, perplexed eyes.

"Ai, so it is," he said at last, "and now let us go and get sleep." He rose and the others followed him out of the council house.

II

● 123 Early the next morning, while the tent on our boat was
182 being finished, the Granman came into the council house
189 with a calabash and a buzzard's feather in his hand. He
579 came up to each of us in turn, and struck with the medicine-
602 dipped feather the tops of our heads, brushed the eyes,

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touched the palms of our hands, and struck against the calves three times.

"This is obia," he said simply, and when he was finished, he went out.

Our cook knew this obia. It was Opete obia, medicine bearing the name of the sacred buzzard. It was given us that we might have a good journey down the river.

"Did you see how he was careful to touch the eyes?" our cook pointed out to us. "The Opete gets the eyes when it comes to a person, just like Kromanti goes into the head, and Vodu into the belly."

When we went out for a moment, and walked toward our storeroom, we saw the Granman splash water out of a calabash onto the floor and front wall of the house which held our supplies. Was it that our belongings might be safe on our journey down? It was no time for questions, and we asked none.

Women and children again came crowding about the white woman. Though they had been warned not to talk, there was still something of the warm feeling of earlier times which a command did not entirely destroy. Then, too, the order was that the sendoff was to lack no formality. As we stood there, a dog came running down the path. He was on his way to the river. In his mouth was a large ball of something which had been thoroughly charred. It was an offering to the river spirits, perhaps. It might have been less pleasant magic. He had been sent by men who were busy in the ancestral shrine.

When the white woman called attention to the dog, and asked what he held, the women recoiled with amazement that she should have seen the dog at all. Part of the magic might have been, as it was in some formulas we recorded, that he was to pass by invisible to the strangers. But this is conjecture. . . .

The moment before we went down the path to the river, Amasina came up alone, and gave us her hand. She was gracious, and completely at her ease. Whatever was said, she had faith in her god Towenu, who had vouched for our friendship.

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Chapter XV

THE ARTIST OF MA'LOBBI

I

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WE WERE recalled to the council house for a final informal krutu with Granman Yankuso and some of his elders before the more formal leave-taking on the river bank. Our boats were being loaded and soon we should be on our way down river. With the elders were the diviners, and our friend, the bassia.

The Granman opened the krutu, greeting and addressing the men who were present, until he turned to us.

"White man, you and your woman came to my village. I held you both well. Now when you are ready to go I give you my grandson for paddler, and the chief of my village for captain of your boat. That is how we do with those who come in friendship."

Through our town man, as was the way of the krutu, we spoke our acknowledgments to him, and our regrets that our visit was ending. Through our man, the last gifts to the tribal head were tendered, and through one of the elders, the ritual expression of thanks was returned us for what we had put before the Granman.

We had two favors to ask of him. For many days we had lived in this house, and had admired the fine carvings which the council house held. In our own country, when we thought of the days on the upper Saramacca River, a piece of carving from this house would give us much pleasure. But of the elaborate carvings we did not wish to

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deprive him. Might we buy, however, one of the simple benches from the shelf above the door, which the chiefs and we ourselves had used many times?

The one we took down had interested us for its possible ritual significance. On its top a single design was repeated four times. It was a representation of an axe-head, and the clan of Yankuso was the Matchau, the Axe Clan.

The Granman looked at the diviner. "*Fa fo do?*—What to do?" was his query.

The man he addressed murmured, "*T'obi*—Trouble."

But it was, after all, only a small and slightly ornamented bench.

"Take it!" the Granman said. "What else is it you ask?"

There was the apinti drum. In the house where objects of all peoples of the earth were brought for men and women to look at, there were none of the fine carvings the Bush Negroes make. When we returned, we would place beside the African and Indian objects which were there those of the Saramacca people. As yet, we had not been able to buy an apinti drum. This one was more beautiful than any we had seen. Could he not sell it to us, so that everyone might know that the finest of drums had come from the council house of Moana Yankuso, Granman of the Saramacca people?

This time he did not hesitate. He smiled, and shook his head.

"No, no, white man," he said, "this drum is not for me to sell. This one I cannot part with, not for all your goods. Down river, when you visit my villages, you can get an apinti which will be beautiful. When you come to the village of Akunkun, and you see Kasanya, ask him to find you an apinti. I will tell Captain Mataibo to leave a message at other villages that you want an apinti. This one no gold can buy."

This was not our first attempt to buy an apinti drum. Nor was it to be the last refusal.

Waiting, we sat in the council house while our supplies were being carried to the canoes and placed in them, until

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123 623 574 609 [554] Mataibo, the head of Yankuso's village, who was entrusted with the safe passage of our boats, came to announce that the men had done loading. Before the morning was yet well advanced we left the house, and with the Granman under his umbrella, which was the highest of insignia, passed to the river bank.

Our friends were there—the bassia, and Dida, and Amasina, and the Granman's wives and his little grandson, who shouted to us, "*Waka bon, ye'e!*—Travel well, you hear!" in the best manner of his elders. Again three guns sounded, and once more we were on the river, looking up at the people of these villages of the Pikien Rio who were waving to us from the shore.

502 Going down the river was restful. The enjoyment of the easy motion of the boats was felt in the manner of the paddlers themselves. Now there was no hard poling against the heavy current. As canoes were urged on the two paddlers wielded their long blades in unison, and the dugouts swung downstream in the center of the river, where the current was heaviest. When the murmurs of the rapids ahead were heard, it was but a moment until they grew into a roar, and then, in another, we were through, the man at the front standing up for an instant so that, with a twist of his paddle, he might turn the head of the boat from any threatening rock, while the stern man did not stroke at all, but merely held the craft on the course which was marked where the water tossed itself into foam-capped waves. Sometimes, as we came to rapids where the force of the water was especially strong, or there was a sharp double curve to be negotiated, the two boats would pause for a moment while Mataibo called out to the younger men the course to follow. Then into the falls, and through them, and our bow paddler would carefully rearrange his loin cloth and sit down once more to take up his steady stroking.

123 609 [431] Opposite one village Sungi came in his boat to meet us, to give and receive a final gift, and say his goodbye. But it was not to the landing place of Dahomey that he took us for this interchange, but to the village of his wife, he told

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us when we asked him. At one landing place where we stopped for a moment, we could hear the drums sounding the rhythm to the river gods, but the drumming stopped abruptly as word went back along the path that white people had come. Men streaked with pemba came down to the river to look at the Bakra who had visited the village of their Granman.

In the boat, we missed Bayo. The grandson of the Granman, who was our bow paddler, we had met but casually before we had started. There had been none of the chances for conversation that had made of Bayo a friend before he and his great-grandfather came to take us to the country of the Granman. Later we would come to know this youth for a pleasant young man, capable and quiet, who was proud to show his ability, and quick to resent the suggestions of our town man in such matters as making a shelter for the night.

"We are children of the bush!" the young man exclaimed sharply. "We know how to make this." And such a good shelter did the paddlers build that men of a near-by village, who passed, stopped and asked that it not be torn down the next morning, as had to be done with shelters erected for the night on the land of a strange clan, but that we should let it stand so that others might use it.

When we asked him questions, however, or made observations on people who passed by in their canoes, he gave us noncommittal replies. Mataibo, the captain of our boat, was even more reserved, though he liked to twit our town man, and in an unofficial capacity would have been amusing. Conversation between the two paddlers, or between them and the two young men who were entrusted with our other boat, was in the clipped, rapid "deep-Saramacca" speech which, in spite of our use of it in conversation at the Granman's village, we still found it difficult to follow when Bush Negroes spoke informally to one another.

As the day wore on, we began to get used to the rapidity with which village after village was passed. Here was the landing place of the one where we had stopped so that

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484 Sedefo might greet his sister. It was almost a half-day's travel, going up river, from Asindopo Lantiwe, yet it was not quite noon, and we were passing it. Here was Hei Kununu, its steep slopes already swinging into sight as we rounded a bend of the river and came through the small rapids above the settlement, and still it seemed as though we had but begun our course down toward our base camp and the railhead. And it was still early in the afternoon when we came to Ma'lobbi.

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462 At the landing place, women were about. Much of the work of the Bush Negro woman is at the river's edge, and for strangers like ourselves, passing in a dugout, the presence of women working on the bank was the only sign [361] that here was a landing place, and that farther inland lay a [912] village. To the river they came with their carved clothes [296] beaters, like the one we could see in the hand of the woman who greeted us here at Ma'lobbi, fashioned, as we later learned when she sold it to us, in the shape of a male vodu head on one end, and a female snake on the other. It was at the edge of the water that a woman scraped cooking pots [264] and calabash dishes with sand, and it was here, if it seemed a good day for fishing, that a woman would go wading in the water to rest a cooking pot on the river [206] bottom, and stand silently until an inquisitive school of small fish swam into it when, with a quick jerk, she would bring it up to take out what fish there were. This, aside from the use of small hooks, was the only kind of fishing a woman could do, for the fishing traps were for the use of men. But the cooking pot brought in many small fish to add flavor to a dish of rice.

● 123 609 As we walked into the village, accompanied by one of our younger paddlers, the bassia greeted us. The head of the village was waiting for us, he told us. Paddlers of small boats on their way downstream had spread the word that our visit with the Granman was drawing to an end.

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THE ARTIST OF MA'LOBBI

As we walked toward the chief's house we looked about us, seeing again the evidence that here at Ma'lobbi there were men who knew how to carve wood, seeing why it was that our paddlers had spoken of it as a place for fine work.

"Ai, at Ma'lobbi they are good carvers."

Here was a house with its doorposts elaborately carved; there a beautifully worked rice tray, lying where it had been left by the woman who owned it, until she should need it later in the day for winnowing her rice; farther along a great bench stood, with the designs cut through in a fluid progression over top and sides.

The captain was in the lower portion of his two-story house when we entered. Several of the older men, who had been present at our earlier visit and who remembered our gifts of tobacco, came to join us, as the news of our arrival spread through the village. Soon the women were standing about, motioning to the white woman to come with them.

The house in which the captain received us was larger and more imposing than the others in the village. It was his *gudu-wosu*—his treasure house. Its lower portion, where we sat in conversation with him, was where he worked. Above, where none of his wives might enter, his wealth was stored. Here he kept the pieces he had carved, and from here drew from time to time the presents he gave his wives. Here lay the wealth which his nephews would inherit when he died. But below, in the partially open shelter, was his workshop where he fashioned rough logs into stools and paddles, combs and food stirrers, trays and canoe seats, and all manner of objects which he and his women used in their daily routine.

All about the walls hung tools. There were machetes, whose sharp blades showed a reflection of fire from the sun which slanted on the wall. We had never seen so many of these bush knives on display, nor, for that matter, such an array of tools anywhere on this river. From projecting boards or nails driven into posts hung several compasses, their hinged arms sharp-pointed, so that the craftsman might describe the perfect circles on the wood he carved.

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of design which only the carver himself could name, or someone who knew the symbolism of the art tradition in which this paddle was carved.

During our first visit to these people we had been completely balked by the unwillingness of the Bush Negroes to discuss their carvings. In answer to our questions we got delightful evasions, but with the coming of Bayo to our base camp, carrying his crudely carved stool, we learned enough to make it clear that there was a great deal of symbolism in the carving of the Bush Negroes and, as our knowledge of these symbols increased, it became increasingly easier to get descriptions of carvings in terms of the meanings and values these held for the Bush Negroes themselves.

Now, sitting in the workshop of one of the finest of Saramacca carvers, the captain of Ma'lobbi, we traced those parts of the design which we knew, mentioning their significance to the men who were about.

"There are two snakes," we said, pointing to the realistically entwined bodies which formed the upper portion of the hand grip, ending at the top with recognizable heads, and with mouths held open, which supported symmetrical figures of the top of the paddle.

"Aboma snakes," one man said, verifying to himself our statement.

"These," we continued, "are the teeth of the great lizard—*bamba tande*—and this part below the hand-grip reaching part way toward the blade is a carved chain, and you call it *moni mo' muye*—money is more than woman."

The men laughed. "Awa, so it is. The man knows about Saramacca carving."

And one of them took up the explanation, pointing out the two symmetrical figures which were posed opposite each other above the mouths of the snakes. "These are monkeys. They are women monkeys. No, don't call them just keskesi, their name is makaka," he went on, giving us the name of the species, when we spoke the word for monkey. "See the ears, the heads, the breasts. Ai, I

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know you see them. They told you much on the upper river."

As he finished speaking, the captain returned with his wife. Excited comments greeted him.

"The white man here knows *tembe*—carving."

"He knows lizard's teeth design."

"He knew that this was the aboma snake, and the makaka."

The old man was skeptical. "*A so?* Was it true?" Let the Bakra show him.

We repeated the lesson we had just learned to the captain and his wife who owned the paddle. They listened thoughtfully. Then the woman spoke.

"White man, I have used this paddle for many years. I do not like to sell it. But you care for it. You are a man who knows carving. In your country you tell me other men know carving. They will look at it, and see it is beautiful, and they will know it is from the Saramacca. Take it, and pay me what you like."

There were other carvings which we bought—a large rice-carrying tray, and some food stirrers, one of which was especially fine, made as it was of two small paddles with miniature blades, the handles joined by a wooden ring-chain, and all of this carved out of one piece of wood.

3

Few things on the river seemed to the outsiders more characteristic of the life of the Saramacca people than these carvings which were met with everywhere, however small the village, however poor the home. When the seasonal rains came, men incised their desires on wood, which later told the legend of procreation, or safety on the river, or a curse invoked against a woman if she proved unfaithful; or something of humor, such as a man bidding for a girl's favor, and she refusing him, while up above intertwined were a man and woman, symbolizing the ultimate consummation with the proper suitor.

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The cult of fertility came to the Suriname bush from Africa. Deepseated today in this civilization, it is not strange that it should be invoked again and again in the carvings, that men and women in sexual congress, and animals in the act of reproduction should dominate the art motifs, and in particular those carvings which men make for their women.

The symbolism is known to all on the river though, as we have indicated, a gifted artist might play with his medium, and even give his own name to what he had designed. Evidences of nontraditional playing with technique were, to be sure, not met with often, but one or two instances stand out. One that was especially striking was a hinged folding stool, fashioned after a bench seen in the city, and decorated in traditional fashion, where the problem of decorating unfamiliar surfaces was met.

Bayo could take up many of our photographs of pieces, acquired during our first visit and brought here into the bush to show the natives how their pieces were exhibited, and describe the symbols to us which made up the carvings. There was one which interested him especially. He used to sit with the photograph in his hand, running his fingers over the glossy surface, as though he felt if he continued doing it long he would actually feel the texture of the wood which was so clearly imaged.

"Everything shows. Here's a crack, see?" Then his hands touched one motif after another. "This and this are women, and these are men. A man and woman to one side, and a man and woman facing them. It's like having the tray here, white man." The small designs close to the rim of the tray, facing each other, were the children to be born of these unions. "This is a boy, and this a girl. That is for both women to make twins."

We were looking over his shoulder as he explained the symbols, but still could not distinguish in the symbols to the side which represented the male child and which the female.

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[539] *"You have come to go, come to go far, come to go far to bring the wood to the water. But it is long, it is far, to the river. Thank you, friends."*

Then the song was taken up by the workers and, with each rhythmic measure, the great piece of lumber went farther through the jungle on its way to the river. When he had chanted for us the greeting to the men, Bayo began to sing a song relating to men's casual exploits with
[831] women and, as he finished the song, he laughed. "White man, if you came with us, you would hear what songs the men make up about women!"

3

126 The phonograph had delighted Bayo from the first. When Apanto had summoned the spirit of his obia to fight the machine, Bayo had watched. When the white man's glue had repaired the broken belt, and the hot sun had made the machine "walk" once more, Bayo had approved.

"The machine is not weak," he had said. "I will sing for it."

And sing for it he did.

But the curse of Apanto still troubled the machine, for up the river and down there had been difficulty with it. Often when there was a particularly good song to be recorded, the belt would give, the machine would fail the white man. The story of the prowess of Apanto had gone up the river with the Gankwe paddlers, and when the machine stopped, heads nodded, and we would catch the word "obia" among the murmurs of the bystanders.

126 Bayo thought, it seemed, that the machine's proud
123 spirit was by this time properly chastened and, since twice
782 the machine had refused to work while he was singing into
796 it, twice had made him stop the song and its drum accompaniment, he decided to take matters into his own hands.

"White man," said Bayo, shortly after our return from up the river, "I will help the spirit of the machine. I will

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

call the great gods. Apanto's spirit is strong, but Bayo has strong gods, too."

The machine was made ready for him, and Bayo sat down on a convenient box, his head bent over the tumao drum which we had acquired and which his fingers could scarce ever be near but that they played on it.

"It is not the right drum," he said. "You should have an apinti for me to speak to the gods. But I will try it with this one. Tomorrow I will go up the river to Djamungo. I know a man who has an apinti. You will give me money, and I will buy it for you. But now I will speak on the tumao."

He began the irregular tapping which we had learned to identify as the drum language. With one hand he carried the message, while with the other he played irrelevant motifs which served to confound anyone not initiated and leave him, as it left us, who had worked out some of the general principles on which this drum language was based, utterly unable to interpret it or to tell which were the significant elements.

"The great gods will look after your machine now, if they will listen to the tumao."

The next day Bayo went upstream to get us the apinti we so desired. He was not successful, but the gods had listened to him, when he had invoked them on the tumao, for Bayo's ministrations ended all trouble with our recalcitrant phonograph. Bayo indeed had strong spirits!

As the days went on, and record after record was put on the turntable, and with its tracing of songs, or examples of Bush Negro speech, or fragments of the rhythms that called the various gods, was taken off and carefully put into its felt-lined box, Bayo visibly swelled with pride. This was his doing! With his strong spirits he had called the great gods! He was young, and he had not spoken on the proper drum, but they had listened to him! So his thoughts went, and so he would repeat them to us.

His interest in the phonograph was intensified the more he saw of it, and he sang and spoke and drummed, either

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

REBEL DESTINY

7

The next day was our last among the Saramacca people. Bayo came to us early to help with the packing. He was apparently none the worse for his seizure and, as he worked, we could tell from his manner how release had come to him and how the tension we had noticed the past few days had left him.

On his body were no marks. His mouth showed no cuts where the glass was bitten off and chewed. When we told him about the glass, he knew nothing of it. Had he not known about this eating of glass, he might well have doubted our word, for when we examined his lips and palate and tongue, not even a scratch showed.

"What did you drum last night, Bayo?"

"When, before the obia came to me?"

He remembered nothing after he had leaped from the improvised apinti to run into the bush.

"Not when you drummed apinti, but when you came back here and took the tumao to the river."

"I don't remember. Did I do that?"

8

Despite the early hour we had to leave in order to catch the weekly train for the coast, the boats of our friends began to be seen off the landing place as they came to say their farewells. The good woman Tita, whom they called Mother Snake behind her back, was the first to arrive. She walked slowly up from the river bank, pipe in mouth, a pot on her head, and one in each hand. The pots held obias which, she said, were made especially for us, to give us great powers in our own land—one to keep us safe from the ghosts of those we had wronged; one to guard us against the acts of the unfriendly living; one to make all those from whom we sought advantage "love" us.

Sedefo's younger wife came with her child on her back to collect whatever tin cans were about, and some gift for the child when it wakened, knowing that something was

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

always given to children in the white man's camp. With her, too, came Sedefo's eldest son, the one who had already danced Kromanti. 173

"White man," he said in a soft confidential voice that was like his father's, "you gave the Granman gifts. Lower river chiefs are big men, too." This was a prelude to the suggestion that the Gankwe chief would not take it amiss if we sent him a pith helmet.

From the village where we had seen Bayo possessed the night before, Tenye and her two brothers, Yamati and Sabape, came to say goodbye, and with them was their "father" Semiye, Abane's brother. He was to have been "captain" of our dugout, but several days before he had told us he would be unable to go with us to the railhead. As haltingly he gave us his reasons, we wished that white men's lives were not keyed to railroad and boat and university schedules—wished, too, that it were possible to give a happier turn to the drama which bush destiny seemed ready to stage for Semiye.

Semiye was as slender and graceful as Abane, that superb dancer whom Yamati and Sabape, sons by different wives, wished so much to emulate. The passion which Abane had for dancing, Semiye knew to flare up within himself when he was at work. No man on the lower river could send a heavily loaded boat up the rapids faster than Semiye, and when he went fishing or lumbering, the catch he brought back was large, his timber rafts were valuable. He had not always felt this drive for work. When he and his village friend Abai were boys together, Abai had been the one to suggest games, to make decisions, to show courage in leading girls down side paths into the bush. When the time came for Semiye to go through the Kromanti initiation, he could not do the feats which Abai did so easily and with such bravado. Later, when the courage of a man was his, he was ashamed to ask for permission to go through the initiatory rites that were intended to test boys, and so Semiye was one of the few men on the river who was not a Kromanti man. 159

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

533 faces. The drummers stop to tune to the desired pitch, driv-
796 ing in the pegs with the back edge of a bush-knife. Then they resume, rattling out a sharply insistent tempo. Women begin to sway. Some of them start a plaintive jungle song. The drums never stop.

796 A woman disengages herself from the crowd and enters
535 the open space. She bends forward from the waist at a right angle. Her arms form a circle beyond her head, saffron palms outward. She sways from the hips, her torso contorted with sinuous suggestion. Then her feet on the bare earth rap out the tempo that the brown fingers of the men are drumming on the dried skin. The others begin patting juba.

It is a false start. The woman interrupts her dance to criticize the orchestra for not playing in her mood. The crowd is not yet possessed.

Dodo, the woman *bosseia,* or boss, goes about urging the women to begin. Meanwhile the bahkra slips through the
123 crowd pouring out drinks of high wine to add to the dark
782 hilarity of the occasion. Always before drinking they will
273 spit on the ground a libation to the gods. A mother gives the rum to her seven-year-old child, who does not flinch from the burning potion.

A new tempo. Three little girls, slim in their nudity, enter the central space. The oldest is about eleven. They stand with their backs to us and begin the *bandamba* dance. The evening is on.

Standing still in the firelight, hands behind their heads, they arch their loins and raise their buttocks up and down.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Paramaca

The small Paramacca tribe does much less in the way of
322 wood carving than do the others of the Djukas. This was evidenced by the few pieces we were able to collect and was also known to be a fact by the Aucaner Bush Negroes who accompanied us to the Paramacca district. The motifs dis-
184 played upon the articles collected were practically identical with those found on Aucaner pieces.

123 In fairness to the Paramaccas, however, it must be mentioned from our experience among other tribes that collecting is much facilitated when one is cordially known. On a second or third expedition one is able to collect many times more specimens than upon a first introduction. The Bush Negroes are at first shy as a rule and not anxious to part with their belongings.

184 The tribes do not fraternize much with each other. Some
619 travellers report that the Aucaner and Boni tribes feel them-
609 selves superior to the others because they have less contact with the white man. If this is true, we cannot report any personal observation of it. A traveller has no more difficulty among them than among the Saramaccaner people. Some
628 ill-feeling between the Aucaners and Saramaccaners dates
609 back to the slave revolt, when the former observed their peace treaty so scrupulously as even to aid the slave-owners in re-

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

754 More than one person may be involved in the black magic [695] that brings about death, and the burial ceremony may indicate several persons as guilty. This magic is similar to that employed by other primitive peoples. A spirit or soul resides [774] in each living person; if this spirit is destroyed, the person will die. A man can cause the death of his enemy by summoning the spirit out of his enemy's body with herbs and charms and incantations; the spirit can then be shot with a gun. Or else he may procure some of his enemy's nail parings or hair, or any object of close personal association. He should also know his enemy's birthday and secret name. Rites are performed and, as a result, the enemy dies. His spirit has been slain. Magic, therefore, consists of the use of rituals for the purpose of compelling supernatural powers to do one's bidding.

● 123 For this reason many natives object to being photographed. 774 The black camera, they believe, if pointed at them and 822 clicked, will draw out their souls. The person owning the camera can then mutilate or destroy their souls at will. On our first expedition among the Bush Negroes all attempts at photography were difficult. When the attempt was made to take a native's picture the black would cry out, *"No puru me!"*—"Don't draw me out!" They firmly believed that the photographer was trying to draw out their spirits for magical purposes. On the second expedition, returning to the same villages with the developed photographs, we showed them to the natives and watched their reaction. The Negroes examined the snapshots curiously, turning them around, not

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Aucaner

being able to accommodate their eyes to the tiny grey perspectives. When the significance of the chiaroscuro dawned upon them, they broke into broad grins and were mightily pleased. After that most of them readily consented to being photographed.

A woman was suspected of causing by witchcraft the death of the late Granman, Amekti, of the Aucaner tribe. She was severely beaten and was not allowed to attend the ceremony of *Broko Day* (breaking day), the time when mourning is broken.

Broko Day is held four or five months after the death of the Granman. Game is hunted and cassava cake prepared for many days prior to the great feast. It is a time of great festivity; there is dancing, singing, and general merry-making. At this time the *Songai*, the *Pekein play*, and the *Susa* dances are held. The participants are generously smeared with pemba dotee and they wear costumes and decorations which are not seen at any other time. Then, as many of the tribe as is possible gather in the village of the erstwhile Granman, and the feast lasts for about a week. Dancing and feasting continue night and day. At this time the ageedah drum—six to eight feet tall—is played, as well as the smaller instruments already referred to. Toward the end of the ceremony, the hair and nails of the corpse are buried, a new Granman is inaugurated, and the deceased ruler is relegated to the position of an ancestor. Prayers may then ascend heaven-ward to him.

Captain Acrowsie of the Aucaner tribe told us some in-

/1/

Introduction

114 After having left the plantation life in the colony of Surinam,
121 I went back there in the beginning of 1851 with the plan, as the
[101] result of an agreement reached by me with a Belgian firm, to send shiploads of wood to the motherland and Belgium.

[123] I undertook my journeys to the Bush Negroes for this purpose and visited most of their dwelling places, something that entailed effort and great cost, since I distributed ample presents everywhere for the purpose of thereby acquiring their confidence, which they do not readily grant to Whites.

123 At my very first encounter I took the precaution of politely
[576] greeting each one of them without distinction and shaking their
[177] hands, a practice taken over by them from the Whites in the most recent times, which assures them of a feeling of good-will such as they experience among themselves but never from a White.

[352] I spoke to them frankly and in a friendly way, sat next to them in their huts on their low stools, and partook of their meals. In short -- I lived for a while without reserve or fear among them, paying amply for everything that I enjoyed in this way or that.

[273] I also permitted them, whenever they wanted to use any of my store of beverages, such as wine, beer, brandy, and gin, to ask me for it quietly, so that I would be able to order my servants to offer them what they had requested. In addition I supplied /2/ them amply with dram (1), herbs, and lead and, in order to show

1. A kind of inland rum (sugar spirits).

generosity to the women as well, frequently gave them and the children biscuits, cake, or some coins.

[121] In the beginning they were very reserved and mistrustful, but gradually, and after some difficult years, became more open with me, so that I, adapting myself entirely to their practices, was able to carry out my plan to have the necessary wood processed by them.

/2 cont./

114 439 Much wood was ordered by me, and all that I received was paid for according to the actual value and in accordance with a concluded agreement.

• 123 I lent several of them money, in spite of already having been misled and cheated by them frequently, and continued to treat them amicably, to give them articles of clothing, and, indeed, sometimes for bad wood, which they tried to force upon me among the good pieces, even though I noticed this, I nonetheless continued to pay them decently just as for good wood, whereby I made them realize that I wanted to do business in an accomodating way.

So I learned more and more of their way of life, customs, and habits, respected these in everything, and finally succeeded in leading them back from various bad habits and shortcomings and to observe a more honest way of dealing with me. I was even able to bring it about so that I enjoyed a blind trust and in return was able to give my complete trust to some.

114 439 Since the beginning of 1857 I have been the owner of a sawmill with which the previous owner could do little or nothing because he always lacked the logs needed for the sawing of boards, whereas I, on the other hand, receive so much wood from the Bush Negroes that it is frequently too much for me.

123 439 Many of them who are not even my regular workmen refuse to sell their wood on the plantations and bring it all the way to my sawmill located near the town; because, so they contend, they also want to share in the privileges which the other Bush Negroes enjoy in accordance with the agreement concluded with me.

123 Most of the Bush Negroes know me, if not in person, at least by name.

I have also had to promise them that I will bring up my son /3/ so that later he will be able to take my place and deal with their descendants in the same manner as I am now doing with them, while they, too, drill their children to conduct themselves toward my son as the parents do toward me. In this way they want to make any split between my family and theirs impossible, even in the future.

Djuka

/3 cont./

123 In connection with what I have already said concerning an agreement concluded by me with them, I regard it as not inappropriate to give here a sketch of the manner in which I was requested to enter into this agreement with them, and what happened before they came to an agreement with me in such an extraordinary manner.

After I had already dealt with them for some time in an increasingly open manner and my journeys to visit them had become more frequent, some of the chiefs confidentially notified me that, although they had already come to know me over a considerable period of time and regarded me as a good and honest man, since they had experienced better treatment from me than from many others with whom they had previously had dealings, they could nonetheless not simply assume that I would always remain the same and that possibly I had completely different intentions with regard to them which they might later regret. For this reason many of them had still been reluctant to commit themselves definitely to work for me. In order to do away completely with this mistrust among them, I continued to stay with them in the bush for a considerable time and always demonstrated that I had honest intentions with regard to them, until after a few weeks, as a result of the open-handed giving away of food and drink, I noticed that I was short of everything and was forced to send my vessel to Paramaribo in order to fetch what was needed, whereby I found myself completely alone among them.

123 675 [622] When thus, after the departure of my vessel, I spent a number of hours talking about my plans with the headman of the village, called Sparri Passi (1), in his hut, he strongly advised me

1. Sparri (a large flat fish) way.

to conclude at this time the agreement customary among them. I agreed and immediately requested him to accompany me via a bush path to the nearest village, Manjaondro (2), in order to

2. Under the manja tree.

123
675
[501]

/3 cont./
request the captain residing there, Kwassi jenni, to man all the available korjalen (3) and to send them around to the camps of

3. Small vessels made out of tree trunks.

the Bush Negroes, in order to notify all the Aukaners /Aucaners/ /4/ in that district that I, sojourning entirely by myself among them, wished to see them all together so as to have the opportunity, in the place to be determined by them and in accordance with their manner and customs, to take the oath of agreement to remain at all times faithful to one another.

Three days were spent in deliberations and consultations among various captains, council members, and elders, before I could succeed in obtaining their consent for this.

[527] Finally, however, it was decided to have the agreement ceremony take place on Friday (a day that is holy among them), when the sun reached its midday point.

On this day, around eleven o'clock in the forenoon, one of the oldest and most influential among them took a clean teacup, put in it some dram mixed with herbs, and took a few finely ground plants which he moistened with river water and squeezed over the cup.

I and seven of the most important people then had three small slashes cut into the right hand with a razor. The blood from this, having been taken up with a little flock of cotton, was also squeezed into the cup, and the cotton washed out with river water and wrung out so often that no more signs of blood showed in it. The one and the other having been thoroughly stirred in the cup, the latter was placed on a stool in the open air. At twelve o'clock exactly, a great number of men, women, and children gathered around the stool on which the cup stood, by the side of which they placed me.

Three gunshots were fired. Among all those present a profound silence reigned, whereupon the cup was offered, first to me and then to the other seven persons whose blood was mingled with mine, in order to drink a draught from the contents, whereupon it had to go around to all the men so that, however little, they would

123 675 /4 cont./ drink something from it or merely smell it; indeed! when it was empty, the remaining men who had not yet drunk from it or smelled it had to lick it.

I was then embraced by the headmen and many of the women; they flung the right arm over my left shoulder and the left arm under my right arm and rested their heads for a moment against my right cheek.

[273] After the conclusion, while much dram was drunk, general exuberant gaiety prevailed, and only then was /5/ I told that they had purposely cut me first and given me a drink first in order to ascertain whether I trusted them completely or whether, so entirely by myself, I would have been afraid to submit to their wishes and to do what they demanded of me; they assured me that if I had refused to be the first, none of them would have wanted to conclude the agreement with me.

If, therefore, I had not conducted myself as they wished, I would have missed out completely on this alliance which was so highly important and profitable for me.

466 313 On the following day many of them came to tell me that their work places on the river Cottica supplied little of the kinds of wood that had been pointed out by me for processing, but they declared themselves ready to go and process them immediately for me on the Upper Commewijne river, where they were sure of finding richer forests.

Since the last-named river was closed to them at that time by a governmental decree, I made a request for access in the year [361] 1854, in order to be able to work with them at this river. This was granted to me, and since then a few hundred Bush Negroes have been staying there and have laid out dwellings and croplands, while they continuously, with unexampled industry, process the wood needed by me and deliver it to the sawmill.

/18 cont./

966 787 times, no noticeable movement has been observed, the answer is negative, and one proceeds with the corpse all the way to the end of the crowd ranged on either side. Everyone endeavors to be present on such occasions in order not to cast any blame upon himself or to arouse suspicion.

If, however, the answer is in the affirmative, then one asks whether the right person or a close relative of his is here; if the answer to this is also affirmative, one proceeds to inquire about the degree of blood relationship until one has finally discovered who the actual person is. Since this happens in the presence of so many persons as witnesses, it is regarded as valid proof, and the corpse is buried. However incomprehensible and impossible this may appear, this procedure is nonetheless actually practiced constantly among the Bush Negroes. I have been an eyewitness several times. [123]

695 [693] A few days later the person indicated, in case he was not present at the above-mentioned inquiry, is tracked down, if necessary fetched forcibly, and brought before the governor or the chief, who questions him in the presence of the captains or the council members. In case of denial, he is offered something to drink, which, however, he will not accept if he is guilty, since it has become apparent that whoever drinks it with a pounding or uneasy heart frequently manifests immediate symptoms, such as vomiting, swelling, chlorosis, and so forth. If the person has been prepared to brave this (in spite of the conviction of his misdeed), he is put to death by means of the most horrible and unheard-of tortures, whereas in the case of confession he is forced with the whip to reveal whom else he has poisoned during his life. [681]

696 682 All the relatives of the poisoned person are then called in order to be present at the punishment and to pull on his ears with all possible force by means of a pair of pincers, one after another. Subsequently a bowl with pinda blaf is set before him, in which a turtle must be boiled, as well as a tomtom made of ripe bananas. All this, after all, is regarded as the tastiest food. He is then /19/ again severely beaten with a whip, whereupon he must eat what has been prepared for him, and immediately afterwards [262]

/20/

765 Thereupon follows a second, who just like the first has a calabash in hand, but this time filled with spirituous liquor, and from time to time sprinkles a few drops of it on the ground, in token of the fact that on this occasion, too, by means of drink, they think of the deceased with joy.

Then they again return to the dwelling, where all are gathered, and celebrate an enjoyable night with song and dancing until daybreak.

Chapter XII

Character, Virtues and Vices

157 [577] The Bush Negro, as I have already said above, has a great deal of respect for old age and for distinguished persons; with respect to their closest relations they are honest, which they can- [461] not pride themselves on otherwise. In their ordinary affairs they [609] are not lazy, but work tirelessly whenever it is necessary. With respect to strangers they are generous and obliging, all the more [152] when they can assume that they may claim reward. Jealousy, [784] envy, and malice are their greatest vices. Concerning many matters they have an antipathy that they call trefoe (treef). Thus, [781] for instance, one will eat something, the other not. Also they are very superstitious in small matters, to which they cling all the way down to distant generations; they call that obia (literally translated, bewitchment, magic).

252 [123] An Auca girl who through attachment to my wife and me has already lived with us in the town for fully five years, because [589] since the death of her husband, who was one of my most trusted workers, she did not want to attach herself to another, and who performed all kinds of housework for us, carries her trefoe of not eating any unscaled fish so far that she will not even cook her food on a fire where there is a pot in which an unscaled fish was previously prepared. I know another one who uses no milk and also does not eat meat of any kind (with the exception of bacon), unless it be game, and then it must be prepared by her, on the grounds that everything is prepared with butter and that butter comes from

/22 cont./

123 As a White one must enjoy great confidence among them if one wants to obtain permission to witness such solemnities. Never shall I forget the spectacle when I was present at such a festival; it took place from seven o'clock in the evening until two o'clock in the morning. During all this time I found myself in a very unpleasant state of tension. Although I found myself far from the part inhabited by us (namely the town of Paramaribo) in the deep forest alone in their midst, I was nevertheless not afraid because of my positive conviction of my influence over them. I was not at ease that night, however, and were it not for the fact that I did not want to hinder them or show them that I did not feel at ease at this solemnity, I would have departed, however eager I was to see the result of the movements. I remained, however, until all had come to an end, both for the distinction that fell to me for /23/ having been allowed to be present there and in order not to offend the trust put in me, while to myself I rejoiced at being able later to give to others the description of this solemnity.

Chapter XIV

Language, Odo, and Narratives (1)

538 1. Odo, proverb; narratives are called fori, and tales anansi-tori.

197 Their language is the Negro English customarily spoken here, but in a singsong tone with a peculiar accent.

195 As proof that during the conversation they understand you well, they constantly repeat "Yaa!"

551 When a child is born among them, aside from a general name they also give it a day name, in which for them special meanings are concealed, for instance:

114 /30 cont./
648 in hiding a significant advantage for the colony, since the lack of workers in agriculture makes itself felt with increasing urgency.

202 Accordingly they promised to satisfy my wish by putting
• [123] up the signs customary among them, which would make known to those in hiding my wishes to acquaint them with the good news.

In order to let those in hiding know that they were requested to come out of the forest, they go to work in the following manner.

202 They tie white and blue, also perhaps white and black
822 patches of cotton half an ell long and three thumbs wide in Rhineland fashion to the upper branches of the trees, starting in the deepest part of the forest and progressing to the river /31/ bank. The little flags placed highest are of a dark color, while the patches tied progressively lower toward the river are white.

Those in hiding, who stay in the district and cross through the forest to hunt, discover these signs and see by them that there is something going on; either that others in hiding want to establish contact with them or that they have to fear danger.

The manner in which the signs are attached to the trees makes them understand that if they go more deeply into the forest there will be born for them a dark and dangerous future, whereas, if they can decide to go to the river bank they can walk a white, that is, a bright path and that, following the little white flags, they will find people who either want to make common cause with them or wish to give them important information.

202 Since these persons in hiding are constantly afraid of
152 surprise attack or deception, trust in these signs is not always im-
648 mediately established and thus at first only some of them go down with cunning and caution. When they come into the more inhabited districts, they watch and investigate everything that they wish to know; frequently this investigation extends all the way to Paramaribo. Now the Bush Negroes thought that if they followed their custom in this it would be clear to them why these signs had been placed in the bush and that as a result of these they would very quickly become acquainted with the declared amnesty.

202 I must add here also that in fact many fugitives or
648 persons in hiding later came out of the forests, among whom must

/34 cont./

577 all, toward one another as fellow tribesmen they are very honest and trust one another's word. Frequently it happens that among them one family leaves the camp to go on a journey or else is absent for some other reason, and that it must leave behind unfenced the cultivated land planted with rice, tubers, bananas, bakoven, and sugar cane. But never will another of them steal any of that. And similarly their dwellings are open, since the entrance is not closed off by any door; upon their departure they leave one thing and another in it, but they will never miss any-
626 thing upon their return. Certainly contributing to this is the circumstance that in the vicinity of everybody's property there is a sign or idolatrous image, which they call obia, to which great power is ascribed, and for those who might want to commit dishonest acts, the legend can be observed, as for the European:
784 "Beware of mantraps." The fear that they have of these obias is not unjustified, for if it should happen at any time that misuse of trust took place, then the culprit, however long it takes, upon discovery will not escape the revenge of the deceived, revenge which frequently consists in the administering of secret remedies whereby terrible diseases and sufferings, if not death, come about.

152 They are very concerned about the faithfulness of their
837 wife or wives, /35/ for the Bush Negro is very jealous, whereas the wives cannot be exonerated of being susceptible to seduction. Accordingly it happens among them more than once that marital fidelity is violated.

184 Of the various tribes, the Aucaners are the most
[177] civilized, but over against that also the craftiest, which can be
[157] attributed to their more frequent intercourse with Europeans.
[161] Among their tribes they are the most powerful, and their numerical strength is estimated at 4,000 to 5,000 souls.

● 123 According to the declaration of the Bush Negroes, no White has previously enjoyed the trust and attachment that I experienced from them. However, secretively they always conduct themselves toward the Whites, with respect to me they make an exception. If there is something secret among them that I should like to know, they will, upon my request, immediately and without any diffidence communicate it to me.

/35 cont./

123 466 Also, I am led to believe that for me they cherish a more than general respect, since already for ten years now they have been faithful workers for me, a privilege to which no inhabitant in this colony other than myself can lay claim.

123 778 [761] A family among them, whose head recently died -- according to their statements, through poisoning, which misdeed is supposed to have taken place out of envy, since I gave him preference above others, which he deserved on account of his faithfulness and industry -- has built a hut in the vicinity of its idol signs, in which they placed a crude image cut out of cedar-

[237] wood and painted with white paint. Beside that image they placed a little table and on it laid a number of quill feathers from the pouwies (1), a little bottle with black liquid, symbolizing ink,

1. A pheasant, the Crax alector L.

as well as some slips of paper. Near this little table they dug a number of steps into the ground, and at the lowermost step they made a gutter that runs in the direction of the river. Now when they have a festival with dancing and they want to pay respect to me, they place near it a number of children who constantly pour water brought in jugs, which, flowing down the steps into the gutter, streams riverward. While this ceremony takes place, songs in my honor are sung by the festive crowd.

[822] [829] Now the image, according to their conception, is supposed to be a representation of me, /36/ the white color the sign that I am a white, while the quills, paper, and ink are the attributes of the whites' higher civilization, the streaming water that I stem from the colonists who have come here from across the sea.

123 589 The wife of the headman referred to above came to me in the town shortly after the death of her husband and remained to choose my household as her permanent residence, to which I gladly consented. Faithful and considerate, she performs not only a great many household services, but even anticipates in this respect the wishes of my wife, and out of love for us refuses any monetary compensation.

/27 cont./

614 The Aw.B.2, on whom we could not get sure information because this very closed group did not cooperate willingly with [123] the inquiry, appear to be in a very similar situation, with the difference that their genealogy goes back much farther in time and they no longer remember the origin of this fraction nor the [184] circumstances which tied its fate to that of the Aw.B.1. This group apparently has a separate kunu.

613 614 582 The Awara Bakka lineage is in a special situation from the point of view of exogamy, for not only are there marriages between one fraction and another, but there are two within the same fraction and between relatively near relatives. Thus this group, [183] without openly rejecting the law of exogamy, does not attach the same importance to it as do the others.

613 The Afi lineage. This lineage was founded by Afi, wife of a man from Papaïston, who came to live with him. Like the [101] Toïna lineage, she had come from the small tribe called Bakabuchi which lived in Surinam. However, the Afi and Toïna lineages are not of the same matrilineal origin and the present members of each of the two small groups have no common worship. All of [571] them have lost every tie with their original tribe, and their social life is entirely dependent on that of the Boni group which has taken them in.

[621] Afi settled near Kormotibo. This site is abandoned by her descendants who live, most of them, in Asisi, the rest in Kormotibo.

[619] The lineage has lost every tie with its group of origin. Nevertheless, it is assumed that if one of them wanted to go back there, on proving his relationship, he would take up all his rights again and could demand a site for making his clearings.

613 621 571 /28/ The process of assimilation which took place for the AW.B.3 did not come into play for Afi's descendants with respect to the Papaïston lineage. They are regarded as a separate family group, insufficient in number to constitute a social unit and whose members are placed under the authority of the heads of the villages

/40 cont./

125 In spite of the relations of trust developed between the Boni
[123] and ourselves in the course of the work carried out together during four long missions, we were able to take this census only progressively and indirectly, by using simultaneously the following procedures:

—Study of the genealogy of the groups, going up from woman to woman up to the founding ancestress, then going back down from her. These genealogical tables, some of which extend
[166] over nine generations and include more than 160 persons, brought
[736] to light a certain number of temporarily absent people and individuals who lived away from the villages, isolated in the middle of the Creole gold miners, but continuing to make up part of their group; they also brought to light a certain number of young people and orphan children taken in by distant relatives who would not have spoken about them directly. But on this point, gaps remain;

[126] —Detailed plan of the villages and interrogation of the village heads as to the persons living in each house;

—Interrogation of the women about their dead and surviving children;

—General verification with the help of perfectly trustworthy informants who possessed a thorough knowledge of the genealogy of the groups.

[162] The census, stopped on January 1, 1958, covered 811 per-
sons of whom 667 /41/ were from the villages of the French bank
[765] and 144 from the Surinam bank (Kotika). As for the latter, we questioned them individually when they came to the French bank, especially when they came to attend the end of mourning festivities in Boniville in October, 1957. The Kotika census is less
[128] exact than that of the French villages, and in addition we were
[126] not able to make a plan of the village. For this reason we have not reproduced it in the present work, where only the corresponding genealogical table appears.

/43 cont./

114 of the true foundresses and the circumstances of the formation of
613 the lineages (invaluable information which must still have been present in the memory of the old men at the end of the last century) are lost forever.

128 In order to simplify the drawing up of the genealogical
601 tables, we have eliminated individuals deceased before adult age.

128 Names. To insure the necessary anonymity to our informants
551 without diminishing the accuracy of the statement, we have
601 changed a large part of the names. The fictitious names under
162 which individuals are designated in the genealogical tables as
[101] well as in the inventory of the population were mostly taken from the Djuka, who belong to the same cultural and linguistic group; in other cases, in order "to figure" the census we used a more complex process consisting in exchanging the names of two persons. Children younger than 15 are designated simply by an initial (1).

[648] 1. It is particularly disagreeable to the Refugee Blacks to have their children's names known by Europeans, with the exception of
[123] the doctor. All systematic questioning on this subject runs into clear hostility.

114 Despite these precautions, we recommend that travelers
609 provided with this work make no allusion in front of the Boni to the facts related in it; the Refugee Blacks are very proud and cannot allow an outsider to penetrate forthwith into their family privacy. That would provoke lively hostility toward the indiscreet person and would hinder later work.

114 The table of correspondence between true and fictitious
128 names is held at the disposal of sociologists who may wish to conduct studies on the Boni.

692 /75 cont./
685 The Djuka had killed the tapir which had sunk. Pressed for
[224] time, he had had to leave, requesting the Asisi people to look for it.

The next day Pototo and Amusupé found the animal floating
[251] between two waters. They hid it in the bush and had it smoke-
[262] dried on their own behalf. They ate it with their wives (about 100 kilos of meat).

That ended up by becoming known, and a jealous man denounced them to the grand man.

Called before the lanti kuutu, they had to apologize and were each sentenced to pay as a fine to the grand man a demijohn of 15 liters of tafia (worth about 6,000 francs) within four months.

[735] Both of them were at a loss to pay this fine, belonging to the category of ne'er-do-wells who have no regular activity and live from day to day, selling some fish or game from time to time.

[613] Amusupé appealed to Captain Konduku, head of his lineage, who agreed to pay for the tafia for him, Amusupé reimbursing him little by little.

613 As for Pototo, the head of his lineage refused categorically
689 to help him because he had eaten the maïpouri alone without allowing his family to share it (the village people would have found it normal to profit by the crime, but they deemed it immoral that
[123] one of their relatives had deprived them of meat). After three and a half months, Pototo began to occupy himself seriously at a paid job which he had the luck to find because we needed a bossman for two weeks.

577 The Boni did nothing but laugh while telling us this story.
626 Affairs of this kind, which do not involve any suprahuman inter-
[522] vention, escape in large measure their social morality; they have a certain feeling for what should be done, but submit to it only in proportion as they fear a material and immediate sanction.

/195 cont./

794 [181] The laws of Odun. The cult of Odun (Odū) is the keystone of the social and religious structure of the Refugee Blacks. It is a very secret cult; its rites are not practiced in the presence of outsiders and all curiosity about it meets with frank hostility. [123] The Boni, who talk rather freely about the cults of possession, are mute on the subject of Odun, and one may spend years among them without even hearing this name uttered.

794 184 The worship of Odun is common to the Boni and the Saramaka (perhaps this is what explains the trustful relations which exist between the two groupings). Among the Djuka it is replaced by the worship of Gwangwéla (Grantata), which has exactly the same functions and rites.

776 Odun is not to be confused with the creator God Nana (Masa Gadu). The myths explaining the relationship of these two entities were not known by our informants, but it is clear that Odun was sent to men by Masa Gadu as legislator and judge.

671 Odun's laws have a profound originality, as much by their content as by the sanctions which accompany them. It is not excessive to speak of a religious and moral doctrine of the Refugee Blacks.

[641] These laws appear in negative form. A certain number of acts and behavior are forbidden to those who have entered the society of the Refugee Blacks by taking an oath which binds them for good and all. Offenders will be punished without the direct intervention of men, by the all-powerful action of Odun, who will kill them or /196/ strike them down with sicknesses. As a general rule, Odun's punishment is death; this is what explains the fear his name inspires.

784 673 [754] Odun forbids:

--Sorcery, wisi, in the most general sense, that is, any magic action having as its purpose the killing, making ill, and in a general way doing harm to another person.

/298/

Never do they appeal to the courts to settle their differences, still less their family quarrels; never do they beg for help.

The Europeans' material superiority does not impress them: the whites are more able in mechanics, but they are more able in magic, that is all. The efficacy of European medicine does not shake their convictions: if someone has reasons to believe himself victim of the anger of a gadu, he begins by making the sacrifices intended to appease it, then asks it for authorization to have himself cared for by the whites. Personally we have never done anything to disabuse the Boni of this idea which satisfies at the same time the requirements of medicine and those of social discipline, for it must not be forgotten that for them sickness is punishment for an offense. Thus one sees that unless it is deliberately brought to bear against tradition and against the leaders, the influence of Europeans is without appreciable effect on the civilization of the Refugee Blacks. It is no longer the same when contacts become too frequent, tend to alter drastically the way of life, and especially when these influences become openly "civilizing."

The Future of the Refugee Blacks

Obliged to solve all the problems of life by their own means, the Refugee Blacks have been able to adapt with intelligence to the evolution of the modern world, and their custom has kept all its vigor and effectiveness. Their future would not seem to be threatened if a wave of opinion had not come to the surface these past years, in French Guiana as well as in Surinam, to destroy their civilization, deemed primitive and barbarous, and to fuse them into the population of the coast. This result would be obtained in particular by schooling and evangelization.